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The Child in the Interaction between Intentional and Functional Education



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Preface

In May 1999 The Research Council of Norway endorsed the research project *The Child in the Interaction between Intentional and Functional Education* for a duration of 4 years. This endorsement implied that the Research Council provided the financing of the project. The research design had been prepared by myself and Gudmund Gjelsten from Bergbo Media in close consultation with the Steering Committee and the Reference Group. I express my gratitude to The Research Council of Norway for endorsing and supporting our research project.

Sociologist Tore Hagen at the Department of Social Science, Volda University College, became a member of the research group, but died tragically in an accident in October 2001. In January 2002 associate professor Thor Arnfinn Kleven at the University of Oslo, agreed to replace him as a member of the research team.

At the completion of our research there are many who deserve to be thanked for supporting the project in various ways.

In the starting phase and all through the research period important support and advice has been given by senior advisor Einar Saga at the Ministry of Children and Family Affairs. The now retired director of education in Møre and Romsdal, Elen Lein, recommended the project and helped us in establishing contacts with the schools selected for the research.

I will also thank the participating municipalities for their cooperation and for some financial support. The two institutions behind the research have been Volda University College, which has been administratively responsible, and NLA College of Teacher Education, Bergen.

The Steering Committee has consisted of Principal Bjarne Kvam as chairman, and associate professor Lars Gaute Jøssang, both at NLA College of Teacher Education, and the research team.

Members of the reference group have been: Professor Clifford Christians, professor Quentin Schultze, professor Jack Balswick, associate professor Birger Løvlie, associate professor Asle Gire Dahl, and director of education Elen Lein.

Clifford Christians was one of the lecturers in a seminar at Oslo University arranged by the researchers in March 2002. Asle Gire Dahl has also functioned as an advisor and critical reader of the research documents.

Research director at the National Network for IT-research and Competence in Education, Ola Erstad, University of Oslo, has given critical advice and recommendations. We also thank senior researcher Ingunn Hagen, University of Trondheim, for her help and recommendations at the beginning of the project. Valuable advice has also been given by Fred Olav Sørensen at the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development.

Several of my colleagues at the Department of Social Science at Volda University College have been helping us as critics of the project. I will especially mention professor Kåre Heggen, who several times has given us valuable feedback on our questionnaires and also as a critic in seminars. Further I will thank the chairman of FAKK (Research Group of Christianity and Church Related Topics), professor Per Magne Aadnanes, who together with other colleagues, on many occasions in FAKK-seminars, have given us important feedback and guidance. We also extend thanks to the associate professors Arne Redse, Lars Jørgen Vik and Svein Brurås for their valuable help as critics of the project. Our principal at Volda University College, Gunnar Stave, has all the way been helpful as an advisor at different stages of our project. Thanks also to consultant Bente Gunn Lien for helping us in the editing and printing process of this report and to the research coordinator Reidun Høydal. I will also thank Jan

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I would also like to extend thanks to all the principals and participating teachers of the 17 schools in Møre and Romsdal, which have been key partners in this research. Gudmund Gjelsten and myself have experienced good cooperation and a welcoming attitude when visiting the different schools.

To all those mentioned above, and to many unnamed others, I extend my thanks.

In conclusion I also wish to thank my co-researchers who from their particular backgrounds and with their special competencies have contributed so well to the completion of this research project.

Volda University College, March 2004

Asbjørn Simonnes

Project director

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Chapter 1: Background and research aims

1.1 The basic reasons for this research and definition of some key terms used

In 1997 two of the researchers published the book Growing up in a Media Dominated Society. Identity, Tolerance and Communication in the Upbringing of Children¹. During the period we were preparing the manuscript for this book, we consulted a number of relevant books and documents as background sources for our writing. However, we were surprised to discover that we were not able to find material specifically discussing how children react to being in a dual set of value impulses from both school and media. We then concluded that this would be an interesting research area, focusing especially on the child perspective of being in an interaction between value impulses from both school and media.

In literature consulted in the course of this research, we have not come across any material with a specific comparison between values in intentional teaching and values found in the “parallel school of the media”. However, the Danish researcher Birgitte Tufte, in her doctoral thesis on school and media, on a general basis discusses the tension that exists between the learning coming to children through the school on the one hand and through the media on the other hand.²

Is it fair to refer to the media industry as an informal, functional school? At least, it remains a fact that those who inform and entertain us through the mass media perform a kind of education. The values presented in this kind of education are of great public interest.

The public school curricula in Norway are both legal directives and a syllabus which makes it an intentional teaching document. In our use of the term intentional we mean that the content of L97 by law is to be implemented in the Norwegian public school system. This implies the value profile as well as the factual knowledge in each subject.

The education of children is not only intentional but also functional. By functional education we mean non-formal education outside the classroom, in home, local environment and through the media. In this research we will focus on the role of the media as a major source of functional education today. We have chosen to refer to this functional influence through the media as an education through a “parallel school”.

Our research proposal we finally formulated in the following way:

THE CHILD IN THE INTERACTION BETWEEN INTENTIONAL AND FUNCTIONAL EDUCATION.
A research project studying the relationship between planned education and upbringing at home and school, and the “parallel school” of the media- and computer industry.³

In our use of the term “child” we understand this as defined by UNESCO as a person up to the age of 18. In our research we deal with children up to the age of 16, which marks the end of the Norwegian compulsory public school education.

¹ Gudmund Gjelsten og Asbjørn Simonnes: Å vekse opp i eit mediasamfunn. Identitet, toleranse og kommunikasjon i oppsedinga. Oslo: Det Norske Samlaget, 1997.

² Birgitte Tufte: Skole og medier. Byggesæt til de levende billeders pædagogik. København: Akademisk Forlag, 1995. Passim.

³ This research project was endorsed and financed for a duration of four years by The Research Council of Norway in May 1999.

By the term “interaction” we maintain that children have certain competencies to interpret media messages and also to assess the teaching given to them in the classroom. We primarily want to focus on the children’s interaction with the value impulses from both school and media. In our research we aim at obtaining the views and opinions of the children themselves as to how they experience interacting with values in school and media, cognitively, emotionally and socially.

In our research the term “value” will be studied in the context of L97 and in the context of mass media products, primarily visual media, including computer and Internet presentations.

1.2 Some traits of earlier and recent media research

In an overview on the development of media and communication research, Denis McQuail and Sven Windahl maintain that the different models they describe, from the pioneers up, are modifications and variations of some basic issues such as message, sender, channel, receiver, effects, encoding, decoding, noise etc. The study model might be concentrating on the total communication process or on a specific detail in the process. As the years went by the ability of the receiver to be critical and selective in the face of mass communicated messages has been more and more stressed.⁴ Modern mass communication research was first primarily concerned with the political effects of the media. Later the concern about the moral, social, and cultural consequences came more into focus.⁵ A very important aspect of culture is the educational system of a country.

Ola Erstad also maintains that reception analysis is not a completely new research methodology, but rather a further refinement of aspects found in earlier mass communication research methods, as for example in uses and gratification studies. He feels that the ability of the audience to be critical and discerning in its use of mass mediated products should be more thoroughly investigated. Erstad focuses on certain aspects concerning reception analysis and its place within the broader category of audience research. Special attention is given to the concept of “audience activity”, its meaning and implications.⁶

Individual researchers conceptualize the term “reception analysis” in different ways. But common to this new audience research tradition as a whole is that it places primary and major focus on the reception aspects of the mass communication process.

In Scandinavia the reception analysis research has tried to combine text analysis with the more specific study of the understanding of and reaction to the text on the part of the particular users being studied. The Danish researcher, Kirsten Drotner, has done considerable research studying the interaction between the receiver and the message in a meaning-creating process.⁷

This double approach indicates a critical view of the ability of the receivers to discern the eventual manipulative aspects of a given text. The question is asked about the level of an active and critical attitude on the part of the receivers of media messages.

⁴ Denis McQuail and Sven Windahl: Communication Models for the Study of Mass Communications. London, New York: Longman, 1993. Passim; Denis McQuail: Audience analysis. Thousand Oaks, London, New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1997; Denis McQuail: McQuail’s Mass Communication Theory. 4th ed. Thousand Oaks, London, New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2000.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ola Erstad: ”Publikumsstudier og resepsjonsanalyse”. In Bang, Jørgen and Knut Lundby (eds.): Media reception. Proff Papers. Oslo: Department of Media and Communication, University of Oslo, 1993, pp. 53-72.

⁷ Kirsten Drotner: Mediedannelse – bro eller barriere? Om børns og unges mediebrug. København: Statsministeriets Utvalg, 1995, and Kirsten Drotner et al. Medier og kultur. En grundbog i medieanalyse og medieteor. København: Borgen, 1996. Passim.

There is, however, a broad positive view that reception analysis is a valuable new approach to audience research. But the various elements of the methodology of this research still need much scrutinizing. Professor Ragnar Waldahl has given an interesting analysis of the present status of the reception research theory.⁸

This research tradition sees communication as a meaning-creating process, being constructed in the encounter between media content and the receiver.⁹ Professor Waldahl maintains that the roots of the reception research are to be found partly in literary reception theory, partly in the British cultural studies tradition and partly in the “uses-and gratification” tradition.¹⁰

Anita Werner gives a brief overview of the major trends of the development of media research methodologies from a concentration on the traditional effect-studies, “What effects do the media have on humans?”, to the uses-and gratification research, turning the research approach up-side-down by asking, “What do humans do with the media?” By combining the “uses-and gratifications” model with the “uses-and effects” model, one covers various aspects of the use of media with the old tradition of media effects studies.¹¹

Anita Werner maintains that we need a holistic approach in doing media and communication research, taking both old and new research theories into consideration. In such a holistic approach one needs to look at the interaction between the message and the receiver as well as the context in which the message is received.

Anita Werner summarizes her view of several decades of media research in two major points. First, the insight into how important the family context is for the effects of media in the development of smaller children. Second, the importance of the context of the peer group for young people.¹²

Anita Werner further mentions that there is general agreement among researchers that both content analysis, the individual-psychological perspective as well as the holistic perspective, where belonging to various sub-cultures, are needed in the analysis.

The development from the early effect research to the “uses-and effects” research actually implies a life-style perspective, naturally leading to an interdisciplinary approach in media research. The earlier dominance of social sciences in media research has in recent years had to share the field with a growing humanistic research contribution. This shift has led to research into values and attitudes in media and computer messages as well as to an analysis of the composition techniques used in the products.¹³

This new situation with the emphasis on an interdisciplinary approach opens up for using one or the other avenue of approach, or combining quantitative, qualitative and other methods, when studying children and the media to obtain the most precise insights.¹⁴

The situation of the children in societies becoming more and more dominated by the media very early became a matter of concern to both parents and teachers. The academics reacted to this concern through various types of research. One was particularly concerned with visual

⁸ Ragnar Waldahl: Mediepåvirkning. 2. utg. Oslo: Ad Notam Gyldendal, 1999, pp. 155-161.

⁹ Anita Werner: Barn og fjernsyn. Fritidssysler, flytteønsker og yrkesplaner blant skoleelever i Finnmark før og etter innføringen av fjernsyn. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1972. Passim.

¹⁰ Ragnar Waldahl, op.cit. p. 156.

¹¹ Anita Werner: ”Medier og fortolkning. Fra tanken om overføring til livsstilsforskning og flerfaglig samarbeid.” In Haldar, Marit and Ivar Frønes (eds.): Digital barndom, Oslo 1998, pp. 25-27.

¹² Ibid. pp. 24-33. These questions are also discussed in her dissertation: Oppvekst i fjernsynsalderen, Institutt for presseforskning, Universitetet i Oslo, 1986.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Karl Erik Rosengren (ed.): Media Effects and Beyond. Culture, Socialization and Lifestyles. London, New York: Routledge, 1994. Passim.

communication that came into the homes like an “untamed horse” through the television screen. In 1954 Dr.Hilde Himmelweit, lecturing in Social Psychology at the London School of Economics, was asked to lead a team to study the effects of television on children.¹⁵

The Himmelweit Report caused a considerable stir among the public and among broadcasters. Apart from the details of its research, which in general disproved of the more extreme fears about the effects of the medium, it included a number of suggestions for actions by parents, teachers, and youth club leaders on how they might make the best use of television to benefit the children in their care.¹⁶

The report is considered to be a “classic” on this topic. In the period 1997-98 a project was carried out being considered as a follow-up report of the famous Himmelweit Report, the European comparative study on “Children, Young People and the Changing Media Environment”. Participating in this project were 12 countries: Belgium (Flanders), Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Israel, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom and Switzerland. Norway declined to participate. The project was coordinated by Sonia Livingstone and Moira Bovill at the London School of Economics. In their report we find this quotation:

*La France (1996) characterises the children of 1960s as the TV generation, those of the 1970s as the video generation, those of the 1980s as the Nintendo generation, and those of the 1990s as the Internet generation.*¹⁷

Key research questions included: access, lifestyle, competition, use of new media, and social change. This study is an excellent source of information on children and media in Europe and Israel at the end of the twentieth century.

The UNESCO International Clearinghouse on Children, Youth and Media, at Nordicom, Göteborg University, is in their Yearbooks and in other publications, continuously providing updating on research and debate about violence on the screen and other related and relevant topics from a variety of perspectives.¹⁸

The Latin American media researcher Jesús Martín-Barbero, maintains that mass media consumers in the Latin American region now use the media products in a very selective and discerning way. Media messages have become a source for mediating new insights, at the same time as the consumers turn their back on many details in the presentations.¹⁹

¹⁵ Hilde T. Himmelweit et al.: Television and the Child: An Empirical Study of the Effect of Television on the Young. London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1958.

¹⁶ Sonia Livingstone and Moira Bovill: Young People – New Media. Report of the Research Project “Children, Young People and the Changing Media Environment.” London: London School of Economics and Political Science, 1999. In the foreword by Colin Shaw, Deputy Director of Television, BBC.

¹⁷ Ibid. ch. 1, p. 4.

¹⁸ The UNESCO International Clearingshouse changed its name in 2002 from *Clearingshouse on Children and Violence on the Screen* to *Clearingshouse on Children, Youth and Media*.

¹⁹ Jesús Martín-Barbero. Communication, Culture and Hegemony. From the Media to Mediations. London, Newbury Park, New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1993. Passim. In the covertext of this book, p. 274, it is said: “Martín-Barbero’s socio-cultural mediations opens up a new approach to audience ‘reception theory’ and popular culture that avoids the polarizing dilemmas in classical debates regarding the media-audience relationship”.

Closer to us is a research tradition sometimes referred to as “British Cultural Studies” where also David Buckingham plays a central role. Buckingham, Hey and Moss in an article point out the need for field research in classrooms to understand how children make use of the media.²⁰

Media ethics is a part of media research. Professor Clifford G. Christians at Illinois University, Urbana in an article gives an overview of the first 50 years of academic research on media ethics.²¹

The initiators of the comprehensive Media Panel Project were professors Karl Erik Rosengren and Sven Windahl. The project was conceived as a long-term study on the use of media among children and adolescents. It is not limited to cause and effect relationships when focusing on media use, but also analyzes the interplay of fundamental social agents: the family, contemporaries, school and a mass media. In 1975 the Media Panel Program (MPP) was started as a project with one goal: to investigate why and how children and adolescents use media. Approximately a dozen researchers with different specialties and research backgrounds from the Universities of Lund, Göteborg and Växjö joined the Media Panel. They used both quantitative and qualitative methods and have followed children and adolescents in the cities of Malmö and Växjö for nearly 20 years. The project focuses on the social and demographic backgrounds, groups of contemporaries, the role of media and the school with regard to children’s dominant values and attitudes, social relations and habits.²²

Two of the key issues which the panel problematizes we will mention here. First, what does media use as a child imply for media use as an adult? Second, what are the effects of violence on television? In MPP it became clear that if parents watch a great deal of television, then children tend to do that as well. At the same time, children with significant television use tend to drag parents along with them. Among other things, MPP discovered that for children in the pre-school to 9th grade, age-group, television did not reduce social interaction but rather tended to increase it. At the same time, high levels of organized after-school activities tend to reduce television use, while a low level of organized activity tends to correspond to greater television use. Aggressiveness among children was also extensively mapped by the project. The extent of media use among pre-school boys, for example, created a tendency towards aggression among 5th grade boys. That aggression lead to more watching of video violence and horror films in the 8th grade, which in turn lead to restlessness and lack of concentration in the 9th grade. The MPP results thus tend to show that media use and effects and consequences for children stretch over many years and that a number of chain-effects are created through media use.²³

²⁰ David Buckingham, V. Hey and G. Moss: “Rethinking Television Literacy. How Children understand Television.” In Bazalgette, Cary, Evelyne Bevort and Josiane Savino (eds.): New Directions. Media education worldwide, London and Paris: British Film Institute, Centre de Liaison de l’Enseignement et de Moyens d’Information and UNESCO, 1992, pp. 125-129.

²¹ Clifford G. Christians: “Fifty Years of Scholarship in Media Ethics.” In Journal of Communication, vol. 27, no. 4, autumn, 1977. Christians is also a key person behind the communitarian ethics theory in mass communication (Clifford G. Christians, John P. Ferré and P. Mark Fackler: Good News. Social Ethics & the Press. New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993) and on communication ethics and universal values (Clifford G. Christians and Michael Traber: Communication Ethics and Universal Values. Thousands Oaks, London, New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1997).

²² Karl Erik Rosengren, Ulla Johnsson-Smaragdi and Inga Sonesson: “For better and for worse. Effects studies and beyond.” In Rosengren, Karl Erik (ed.): Media Effects and Beyond. Culture, Socialization and Lifestyles, op.cit. p. 133.

²³ L. Rowell Huesmann and Leonard D. Eron (eds.): Television and the Aggressive Child. A Cross-national Comparison. Hillsdale, N.J.: Erlbaum, 1986. Passim; G. V. Capara: “The Intrusive Commercial. Influence of

The Ballerup-Værløse project for 4th and 8th grades (1983-87) was based on both quantitative and qualitative data, and made use of both questionnaires, interviews and content analysis. Interpretations of the entire empirical data from this age group reveal that electronic visual media functions as a “free room.” According to Birgitte Tufte, this type of media functions psychologically as a means of orienting oneself in the more emotional sides of existence as adults and for finding one’s identity as man or woman. The pedagogical part of the research showed that pupils are interested in certain types of television programs and that differences are gender specific. By analyzing the pupils’ own media productions it became clear that it is both mass media culture, the established culture and their own experiences, dreams and utopia, which emerge in blended forms. Moreover, some of the pupils, weak in book knowledge, were able to find success by making media products.²⁴

Among the conclusions reached through the Ballerup-Værløse Project are that teaching and television and video must take place as an exchange between video production and television analysis, and that video production can begin as early as in the 2nd grade. It is clear that children and adolescents acquire knowledge and competence in a changing society through media. The paradigm shift which has taken place in media research has led to an interest in how receivers utilize media content. This trend opens up for a new kind of pedagogical thinking and action which creates the basis for giving pupils media competence, both as far as function, role and communication process are concerned.

In Norway a research project has currently been conducted, headed by research director Ola Erstad, ITU, on the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) in Norwegian schools.²⁵ Some of the main conclusions of this research show that both teachers and pupils experience ICT as something positive. The achievement of pupils shows a rising tendency and an increased motivation for learning. Further the study gives several examples of the fact that ICT creates new contexts and premises for teaching in the classroom.²⁶

In the general debate on the school and young people in Norway, Thomas Nordahl in an article on school as the meeting point between the school culture represented by the school and the teachers, and the values and interests brought to school by young people themselves, maintains:

Research about life in school has only to a small extent put a searching light on what occupy young people, and how they experience being at school.²⁷

Nordahl continues by quoting Ericson and Schultz: “We must come to know how students view their worlds if we want to teach them”. Nordahl here stresses the need for listening to the voices of the children and young people in order to develop a better learning environment at school. He concludes his article by saying:

We have to realize that the relationship between young people and school is complex and hardly may be understood and changed through simple mechanical models. Increased teaching lessons in key subjects and more focus on discipline and order may

Aggressive TV Commercials on Aggression.” In European Journal of Social Psychology, 17, 1987, pp. 23-31; Rosengren, op.cit. pp. 154-237.

²⁴ Tufte, op.cit. pp. 154-237.

²⁵ Ola Erstad and Trude Haram Frølich: ”Funn og perspektiv i PILOT-forskning.” Paper presented at a concluding conference at Gardermoen, November 20-21, 2003.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Thomas Nordahl: ”Hegemonisk skole og handlende ungdom”. In Tidsskrift for ungdomsforskning, vol. 3, no. 2, 2003, p. 85.

*not necessarily lead to good solutions of the many challenges teachers and pupils face in school.*²⁸

In this change of paradigm where Norwegian education is more and more influenced by the ICT developments, we must be open for a broad adjustment of teaching methodology in an attempt to cope with this new situation.

A central person in the European research on children and media, professor Sonia Livingstone, warns that we should not be too definite in our classification of the groups we research. She maintains:

*..., no one term can be expected to cover the variety of significant relationships which now exist between people and the media. Perhaps most important is that we use the array of available terms with care, and not lose sight of the observation that has become a consensus among audience researchers, that the nature of the relationship, rather than the artificial creation of a reified entity (audience, user, consumer), is most central to the analysis of new media and their social consequences.*²⁹

Livingstone also underlines that when studying people's attitudes toward media, we must keep in mind that people first and foremost are family members, pupils, workers of different trades. These social roles precede their use of the media and influence the way they react to the media.³⁰

1.3 Myths and worldviews in media research

A typical media text for contemporary young people is the production of music, video and advertising. Categorization of such texts becomes a question of genre. If we adopt Peter Larsen's definition of genre as "a system of esthetic or textual conventions," then genre can be described as "mythic structure." These structures function as a means for interpreting and working through social conflicts. The new media texts are characterized by intertextuality, that is they function in networks of meaning which connect them to other texts.

Human beings have always created various "myths" or worldviews as a way to understand themselves with respect to the past, present and future. Myths lead back to both intellectual and emotional engagement that creates a feeling of belonging to a group. Roland Barthes has dealt with the myths which are found in capitalist society and believes that these myths have been monopolized by market forces. He believes we see enlarged versions of the myths of our society in advertising, music and television. He postulates two levels of communicational situations: the denotative, that is the manifest or directly readable level, and the connotative, that is the message which refers to cultural codes and specific signs. Thus the study of an image corresponds to two forms of experience: a collective experience which is culturally and historically determined, and an individual experience which focuses on isolated details of the image.³¹

It has become common today to blend fiction and fact into a kind of mixed genre, a hybrid form of different media texts. This experimentation with different combinations of form and content is often called "faction." Certain programs are thus often created according to the producers' premises and it is up to the receiver to interpret the signs and negotiate the different subliminal layers of the blended form.

²⁸ Ibid. p. 85.

²⁹ Leah. A. Lievrouw and Sonia Livingstone (eds.): Handbook of New Media. Social Shaping and Consequences of ICTs. London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2002, p. 11.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid. pp. 124-125.

One of the great challenges of new media research is precisely to build bridges between traditional forms of written culture and these new types of visual culture.³²

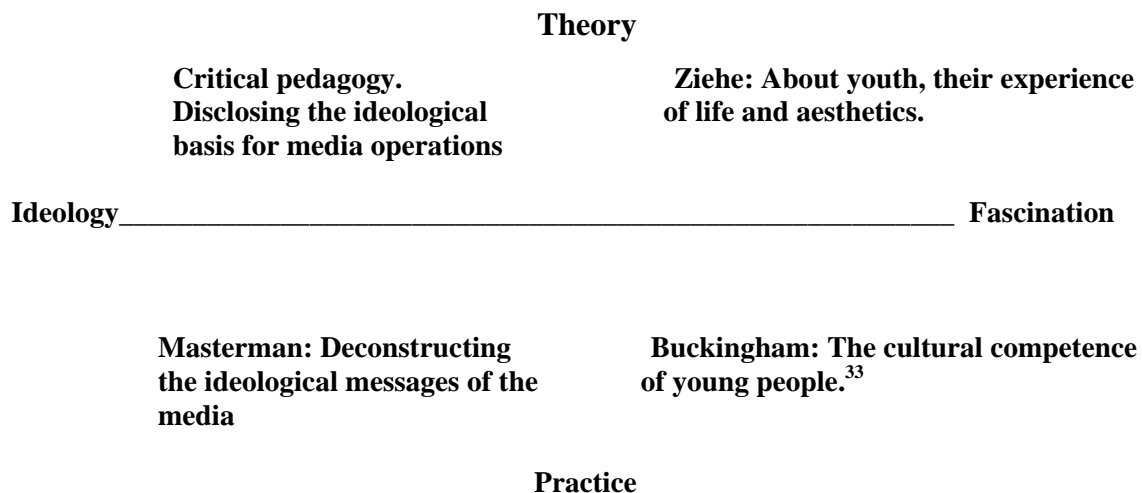
1.4 Media research and media education

For a democracy to function well, the public needs to be properly educated and sufficiently informed. Basically, education involves an attempt on the part of society to put bits and pieces of knowledge and information into a meaningful interpretive perspective in the context of a given culture.

Technical, economic, and cultural developments continually challenge educators to rethink the philosophy of education, curricula planning, and classroom teaching.

In recent decades the media - and computer industry has increasingly become a dominating factor in society. An especially challenging factor, from a cultural and educational point of view, is the gradual change in the role of the mass media from being a “public service” instrument to becoming commercial institutions. This development has alerted educators all over the world to rethink their educational work in the context of this new situation.

There are a great number of studies on media, children and young people in general. The discussions, and the research on the relationship between education and the media- and computer industry is quite impressive. Ola Erstad at the University of Oslo sums up the general trends in the debate/research on media education philosophy up to now in four general trends as to the aims of media education. After having presented various representatives who have somewhat differing opinions on media education, he uses the following figure to illustrate these trends:



Erstad gives here an interesting overview of the relationship between theory and practice, and between ideology and fascination in the discussion on media education.³⁴ He sums up his discussion in the following way:

- Students must be helped to uncover the ideological basis of media messages (H. Giroux and others).

³² Ibid. pp. 126-128.

³³ Ola Erstad: Mediebruk og medieundervisning. (The Use of Media and Media Education). Oslo: Department of Media and Communication, 1997, p. 72.

³⁴ Ibid. pp. 58-75.

- Students must be helped to deconstruct the ideological messages of the media (Len Masterman).
- The real living situation of young people and their emotional experiences of media and computers must be the basis for media education (T. Ziehe and others).
- The actual cultural competence of young people must be the starting point of media education (David Buckingham).³⁵

Erstad points out that the first two approaches have clear political and ideological presuppositions in their pedagogical philosophy. The ideological aspect is dominating. The third and fourth approaches stress emotional experience, fascination, through the exposure to the media. Both approaches want to start media education from where the students are, but they differ in their point of departure into the subject.

Erstad further stresses that even though there are disagreements between these four “schools” of thought, there are also several areas of agreement. Together these four approaches mutually challenge and enrich the research into media education philosophy and media teaching in the classroom.

One area of concern, discussed by most researchers on media education philosophy, is the need for making children and young people able to develop into mature and competent media users. This issue is a common focusing point, in fact an issue being discussed regardless of cultural and political contexts. But how researchers and educators face this issue, certainly differs widely. Media competence is often paraphrased as media literacy. There is, however, no final agreement on how to define the latter term. Both the definition and the use made of media literacy as a teaching tool seem to vary from country to country.³⁶

We want to discuss these questions in more details in chapter 5 in the context of both communication and society. It is our assumption that the role of communication in human existence is of vital importance for becoming an integrated personality (intra personal communication), and for becoming a well adjusted and a well functioning member of human groups (inter personal communication). Communication therefore is a basic human need.³⁷ This basic need cannot be ignored by any communicator without causing mental instability and/or social disadjustment. We therefore see the issue of bad or good in mass communication more as a question of increasing or decreasing mental stability and the ability to adjust socially, rather than a purely ethical issue.³⁸

Closely tied to the basic issue of communication in human existence, is the question of socialization and cultural integration. In all cultures there is a central core of values and perspectives for interpreting human existence in a meaningful way. Social anthropology often uses the term worldview to identify the core of a culture as the interpretive part for those belong to this culture.³⁹ We find these analytical perspectives just mentioned to be pertinent to our particular research project in addition to the others, more generally used tools of analysis. We would like to explore whether it would be possible to develop a basic philosophy on media education that could be extended from being exclusively concerned with the media as a

³⁵ Ibid. pp. 72-74.

³⁶ Ibid. pp. 23-24.

³⁷ Harold D. Laswell: “The Structure and Function of Communication in Society.” In Schramm, Wilbur (ed.): Mass Communications., Urbana, Chicago, London: University of Illinois Press, 1960, pp. 117-130.

³⁸ Gudmund Gjelsten: Møte eller manipulasjon. Etikk i massemedia. Oslo: NKS-Forlaget, 1988, pp. 15-22; 108.

³⁹ Charles Kraft: “Worldview in Intercultural Communication.” In Casmir, Fred L. (ed.): Intercultural and International Communication. Washington D.C.: University Press of America, 1978, pp. 407-411.

study object to include the wider perspective of human communication. This relates especially to aspects of communitarian media ethics and the research on social communication.⁴⁰

This will be discussed more fully in chapter 5.

1.5 Core values in Norwegian school curricula and the UN Declaration on Human Rights

In our research we are operating and interchanging at three levels. Primarily we focus on the experiences and opinions of children at the local level, next we discuss the value issue in a national perspective, and finally we occasionally also try to see these value issues in a global perspective.

What is the ultimate value base from which we orient our value assessments?

We as researchers have for a long time been interested in the value aspects of the Norwegian school curricula as found in L97, a value profile which we share. In addition, we are also interested in studying the value profile of mass media presentations. More specifically we are interested in the value and identity formation of children growing up in a media-saturated society. We will, in our research, have a particular focus on obtaining the perceptions of the children themselves on how they experience being in a dual influence from both school and media.

Communicating the cultural heritage from one generation to another is first of all a matter of making a new generation aware of what is the core value – the worldview – of a given culture. The core value then becomes the prime point for interpretation of any sub-issue discussed in classroom teaching. These core values are defined in the school curricula. However, all countries which are members of the UN, have agreed to adjust their educational value profiles in such a way that local cultural values do not violate the grand value declarations found in the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) which was proclaimed by the General Assembly of the UN on December 10, 1948 and which has been codified in later Conventions. The value universe of the UDHR is the foundation of the UN organization and the basic philosophy behind all its operations.

Nevertheless, these ideals found in important declarations, and legally binding conventions are, it is sorry to say, far from being implemented in all countries of the world. However, it is still better to have some important value documents of a universal scope being violated often, than to have none at all.

Scandinavian University Press in 1992 published a detailed commentary on UDHR:

*The UDHR and the forces of moderation, tolerance and understanding that the text represents will probably in future history-writing be seen as one of the greatest steps forward in the process of global civilization. In several respects, the UDHR was an innovation, the full consequences of which we only gradually and still dimly recognize today.*⁴¹

This is an interesting mixture of a description of the factual situation and a solemn declaration of trust in the importance of the UDHR's role today and in the future. Part of the work towards the implementation of the values presented in the Declaration has to do with the education of children and the general information through mass media:

⁴⁰ Two important researchers in this regard will be consulted, Clifford G. Christians on communitarian ethics and Franz-Josef Eilers on social communication

⁴¹ Asbjørn Eide et al. (eds.) *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights: A Commentary*. London, New York, Toronto: Scandinavian University Press, 1992, 2nd ed. 1993, p. 5.

The UDHR is presented as a standard of achievement "to the end that every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance..."⁴²

There were and are forces in the world which at best pay lip service to the UDHR values, while they in practice deliberately overlook these values. Recent examples of this are the genocides that have taken place in the former Yugoslavia and in Rwanda. To implement these ideals of freedom and human dignity in the peoples of the world requires teaching and education.

1.6 The basic issues to be considered in this particular research project

To be more specific about the use of the collected data, we have decided to concentrate our questions and attentions on three particular areas:

- A. What dominating values do we find in the "parallel school"? Are these values similar to or different from the set of values we find in the latest governmental planning document for the Norwegian public school, grades 1-10, L-97? We especially intend to focus on values and norms regarding relationships, attitudes, tolerance, and problem solving.
- B. How do children and young people react to what they see and hear in the "parallel school"? How do they consider the relationship between the values and attitudes existing in the established upbringing/education passed on to them in home and school, and the values and attitudes they encounter in the products of the "parallel school"? To what degree do children and young people experience being in a "crossfire" between the intentional school/upbringing and the "parallel school" of the media- and computer industry?
- C. What challenges do the "parallel school" represent for pedagogical research and practice today and in the future? How do these challenges affect the life of the families?

These are the basic questions behind our research project. Therefore it will be our prime aim to attempt to find some answers and some new insights into these questions, on the basis of what our findings provide of information about these particular issues. As said earlier, we have not succeeded in finding other pieces of the research using the particular approach we apply in this research. For this reason we shall be extra careful not to stretch our data any further than sound and sober analysis requires. However, we remain confident that our choice of research approach touches on a subject matter that is long overdue in the media research field. It is our hope that our findings will be a useful contribution to a debate on how children experience being taught intentional values in school, and functional values in media products, which often might run against what they have been taught at school.

This issue ought to be a matter of concern to all adults, including media professionals and media communication researchers.

1.7 Some preliminary reflections on the value issue

When trying to make a comparison between values in the public school in Norway with those we find in the media, we are facing a series of delicate theoretical problems. We face

⁴² Ibid. p. 5.

theoretical problems within each of the two entities themselves, and when we look at the two sets of values in an attempt to compare them. We shall first look at the value issue in the media context.

1.7.1 The value issue in the media

Apart from internal guidelines each editor, in principle, chooses his/her sets of values from his/her cultural background. Keeping in mind that a media production is teamwork involving many persons with varied gifts and responsibilities, products might be imprecise or slanted unintentionally. But it may also be a matter of policy to ignore certain subjects, and if they are presented in the media, the issue might be outright caricatured or explained very imprecisely. Recent examples where misuse of mass media communication contributed to unbelievable disasters are amply illustrated in the earlier mentioned genocide catastrophes in former Yugoslavia and in Ruanda. Here is not the place for a broad discussion on morals in the media. We shall limit ourselves to asking whether there is a theoretical value base for the use of media communication within a culture and cross-culturally? It is our assumption that this is really the case. We shall now very briefly try to mention some of the major premises for arriving at such an assumption.

In the book Communication Ethics and Universal Values a group of researchers from various cultures, collectively approach the foundational issues of media ethics from diverse perspectives, and they defend the possibility of universal moral imperatives for media use. They ended up by concluding that having different cultural heritages they found three common values in inter-human communication: truth, respect for another person's dignity, and no harm to the innocent.⁴³

It is important to create a dialogue between cultures with regard to media ethics. Mass communication today is a multicultural, and a cross-cultural affair influencing people in all parts of the world. Christians and Traber have through editing this book made a contribution to this cross-cultural dialogue on a universal basis for media ethics. Their conclusion about some common, cross-cultural values may seem to be rather minimalistic, wide open for interpretations about how the terms agreed upon as common, may be understood. Nevertheless, the theoretical discussions in this book have a substance of quality that cannot be overlooked when discussing universal values in human communication, in all its varied forms.

In the concluding chapter of the book we find a statement that for sure is a universal experience:

*When dialogue stops, violence starts. Violence is the ultimate failure of communication, both interpersonal and intergroup.*⁴⁴

Misuse of communication and an ultimate break down of communication is something very serious indeed. The last lines in the text of this book sum up, as a conclusion of their studies, the key role of communication in human existence:

The chapters demonstrate that certain ethical proto-norms – above all, truth-telling, commitment to justice, freedom in solidarity, and respect for human dignity – are validated as core values in communications in different cultures. These values are called universal not just because they hold true cross-culturally; in fact, there may be cultures or there might be future cultures where such evidence is spurious. The

⁴³ Clifford G. Christians and Michael Traber (eds.): Communication Ethics and Universal Values, op.cit. p. 386.

⁴⁴ Ibid. p. 340.

*universality of these values is beyond culture. It is rooted ontologically in the nature of human beings. It is by virtue of what it means to be human that these values are universal... We are in search of the ultimate and unconditional characteristics of human life from which the meaning of human actions can be derived. Communication is one such act. It qualifies the entire human being.*⁴⁵

There are also other theories of communication, supporting our assumption. The use, or misuse of human communication face to face and through mass mediated technical means can create, sustain or disrupt community life, can further social integration, create alienation, social maladjustment and mental instability. The use of human communication is therefore not a question of moralistic tastes and convictions, it has to do with the well-functioning or the dysfunctioning of humans in community. We shall discuss and substantiate this assumption in more detail later.

1.7.2 The value issue in the Norwegian public school

The latest document on required teaching at all levels, The Curriculum for the 10-Years Compulsory School in Norway (L-97), is a 344-page book, richly illustrated.⁴⁶

This publication functions as a manual for teachers, as well as legally binding directives regarding contents of teaching, and time spent on each subject at all grade levels. It is the first time in Norway that the political authorities have combined a curriculum and teacher's manual with laws and bylaws for performing classroom teaching in public schools.⁴⁷ This implies that the plan and guidelines found in L-97 require a law-enforced implementation. This means that we have now got a more centralized structure of basic education in Norway.

What then are the values in L97? Our concern in this research is to identify some key values in the L97 curriculum.

L97 introduces itself as a national curriculum in the following words:

*The new curriculum, having been issued as a directive, is a legal obligation for local authorities, schools and teachers all over the country.... One of the most significant developments in the new curriculum is that greater emphasis has been placed on a central curriculum. This is intended to ensure a nation-wide education system with a common content of knowledge, traditions and values regardless of where the pupils live, their social background, gender, religion or their mental or physical ability.*⁴⁸

When we look at these general and main goals of the new curriculum it clearly fulfills the "claim against the state"⁴⁹ of providing an adequate educational system for all citizens.

This demonstrates that Norway places **equal educational opportunity for all** as one of the key values in L97. But this value has also a clear political aspect wider than that of educational policy. Norway has been a very homogeneous nation up until recent years. The new curriculum seems to hope for a new national homogeneity regardless of ethnic, religious, and cultural diversities in modern Norway.

⁴⁵ Ibid. p. 341.

⁴⁶ Læreplanverket for den 10-årige grunnskolen. Det kongelige kirke-, utdannings- og forskningsdepartementet, Oslo 1996, English version: The Curriculum for the 10-year Compulsory School in Norway. Oslo: The Royal Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs, 1999.

⁴⁷ Theo Koritzinsky: Pedagogikk og politikk i L-97. Læreplanens innhold og beslutningsprosessene. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 2000, pp. 87-88.

⁴⁸ The Curriculum for the 10-year Compulsory School in Norway, op.cit. Preface p.2

⁴⁹ Alfred Fernandez and Sigfried Jenkner (eds): International Declarations and Conventions on the Right to Education and the Freedom in Education. A book series of the European Forum for Freedom in Education, E/F/F/E. Frankfurt: Info3-Verlag, 1995, p. 11.

But does the new national curriculum provide a proper "defense against the state"⁵⁰? This issue is widely debated in Norway these days. The right of every person to get a proper education is unanimously accepted by all political parties in Norway. But the question remains as to whether "nationbuilding" through a strictly regulated national curriculum, as it has been spelled out in L97, gives enough "freedom in education" for the presentation of the particular worldviews of the various religious, ideological and secular groups?

1.7.3 Some core values underlying all other specific values in the Norwegian public school

Primary and lower secondary education act states in § 1: *Principal aims*

Primary and lower secondary education shall, with the understanding of and in cooperation with the home, assist in providing pupils with a Christian and ethical upbringing, develop their mental and physical abilities, and give them a broad general education so that they can become useful and independent persons in their private lives and in society. Schools shall promote intellectual freedom and tolerance, and emphasize the establishment of a cooperative climate between teachers and pupils and between school and home.⁵¹

This paragraph reveals a dual root to the basic educational philosophy underlying the Norwegian Public School, a religious heritage and a secular political heritage.

The wording of the paragraph does not say a Christian ethical upbringing, but "a Christian and ethical upbringing". This indicates that there is a place both for the particular ideals of the Christian heritage, and for other ethical traditions not violating the basic ideals of "Christian and humanistic values"⁵². These classic humanistic values are also the underlying ethical profile of the UN Declaration on Human Rights, the UN Convention on Children's Rights, as well as the principal ethical guidelines of the total UN operation.

Therefore we contend that the Norwegian Public School operates on a general value-base that supports, and do not violate, the value-base of the UN conventions on general human rights and on other value related issues. However, there is a seemingly a never-ending debate on how these shining and high values best should be implemented in the pedagogical work in the classrooms. Discussing with and communicating values to children in our media society is both challenging and demanding. These issues are very comprehensive, and they are of utmost importance in homes, schools as well as in other fields of the societal cultural debate.

Further in this report we shall first in chapter 2 discuss the methodological basis for our scientific studies. In chapter 3 we continue with a discussion of the two value profiles of school and the media respectively. In chapter 4 we present and assess our main findings in our research. In addition to the information given by the children, we also give an adult perspective on the issues being studied through the contributions of parents and teachers. In chapter 5 we discuss findings and challenges related to pedagogical research and practice. Finally, in chapter 6 we give a summary of our main findings.

⁵⁰ Ibid. p. 11.

⁵¹ L97 (English version), op.cit. p. 16.

⁵² Ibid. p. 23.

Chapter 2: Research methods

The following pages intend to present the research methods utilized in our attempt to throw light on the basic research issues outlined in 1.6.

As the research issues are of different nature, the use of several research methods will be necessary. The problem area A calls for a content analysis of the values in the Norwegian public school and values in media products. When trying to answer research problems within area B we have carried through an empirical investigation, using questionnaires and interviews about the children's experiences of the media in general. The children and the researchers have been together looking at an episode of the TV program that is most popular in the actual age groups, and the children have filled in a pre-prepared form analyzing the episode. Teachers and parents have been interviewed and have filled in questionnaire forms, too. In problem area C challenges for pedagogical research and practice are discussed, on the basis of the results in areas A and B, and relevant literature.

2.1 Problem Area A: Content analysis of the Norwegian public school and of media products, focusing on values

Problem area A presents several methodological challenges. How can we assess the value profile of the Norwegian public school, and, an even greater challenge, how can we assess the value profile of the "parallel school"?

As already cited in 1.7.2, the primary and lower secondary education act states some core values underlying all specific values in the Norwegian public school. L97 elaborates on values, especially in the general part. We have made a content analysis of this section. In accordance with our research problem A, the analysis focus on what L97 says about values and norms regarding relationships, attitudes, tolerance, and problem solving.

L97 is, of course, a normative document. It does not inform us about the real teaching practice, or how values are practiced and taught in real classrooms. However, the status of L97 as a legally binding directive, suggests a high degree of correspondence between the values in L97 and the values emphasized in real school life.

As discussed in 1.7.1, the "parallel school" has no legally binding directives, often not even internal ethical guidelines. Therefore, to have an idea about values in the "parallel school", one has to go to the media products themselves. However, it is impossible, of course, to analyze the vast universe of media products. One has to limit the study to a sample of products. The problem is, however, that there seems to be no method of selection that can guarantee that the analyzed sample of media products is representative of the universe.

In this situation, we decided to analyze episodes from the TV series which turned out to be the most popular ones in the actual age groups. As shown in 4.2, the most popular programs happened to be *Hotel Caesar* among the 12 years old, and *Friends* among the 16 years old. Accordingly, actual episodes from those series were chosen to be analyzed by the pupils after having watched them together with the researchers. The same episodes were selected for analysis by the researchers in problem area A.

Of course, we do not claim that the values appearing in these episodes of *Hotel Caesar* and *Friends* are representative of values in what we have called "the parallel school", not to mention the possibility of being representative of values in the computer media industry. However, focusing on children at the age of 12 and 16, our aim is to make a selection as

representative as possible of their parallel school experience. Ideally, we would have analyzed more than one episode of each of the series, and more than two series. Practical reasons made it necessary to limit the analysis to the two episodes mentioned.

Nevertheless, considering the results to be shown in 4.2, there is reason to believe that our sample of episodes lays a fairly good foundation for comparing values in the Norwegian school and “the parallel school”. First, we have selected episodes from the most popular series in the relevant age groups. Second, 4.2 will show that comedies, soaps and actions are the most popular types of TV- and video programs in these age groups. To the degree that differences are found between the values in the selected episodes and the dominating values in the Norwegian public school, there should be no reason to believe we would have found less difference if we had been able to analyze a representative sample of the favorite programs of the pupils.

It should be noticed, however, that in problem A we compare prescriptions for the school with actual TV episodes. A main reason for this choice is that we find it of great interest to compare the values actually promoted through the parallel school of the media with the values wanted by the Norwegian society to be developed in our children in school. In addition, as already mentioned, the status of L97 as a legal binding directive, suggests a high degree of correspondence between values in L97 as a document and values emphasized in real school life.

2.2 Problem Area B – empirical investigation

The ultimate aim of our research is to make a carefully documented contribution to the research and the debate about the theoretical base for teaching a new generation “media literacy”. We want our empirical investigation to focus on eliciting the cognitive as well as the emotive reactions of children and young people, being in a dual educational process, the intentional education of home and school, and the functional and “parallel school” of the media- and computer industry.

2.2.1 Research from a child perspective

As mentioned at the beginning of this report, the starting up of this research project came as a felt need for registering the child perspective on growing up in a media-saturated society. We therefore felt it necessary to listen to the voices of the children, and hear how they reflected and reacted to being in this interaction of impulses from both school and the media. However, we did not aim at a total analysis of the school-media issue. We have limited ourselves to the value aspect underlying these two institutions.

Discussing child research methodology, Karin Hake in an article writes about the necessity of having the “double perspective” when assessing the subject being researched. She also refers to the Danish researcher Kirsten Drotner who talks about the necessity of having “the scientific double view” when doing research on children and young people. She considers it important to have “the view from outside”, with the distance of a grown-up mind. At the same time there is a need to assess the situation from “the inside out” perspective of children and young people in a sincere solidarity with their views. We as researchers know that there might be clear differences between the conceptions and interpretations of children compared to those of the adults. We are certainly conscious about this double perspective in our encounter with pupils with regard to a correct understanding of data being provided through children.⁵³

⁵³ Karin Hake: “Fjernsynets fascinasjonskraft – et dobbelt perspektiv”. In the journal TILT, Landslaget for medieundervisning, no. 3, 2003, p. 6.

Hake's and Drotner's views underline what should be an essential basis for all kinds of research on children and young people. But we readily admit that it is a challenge to succeed in implementing these principles. Our methods have been chosen to enable us to communicate with the children in different ways, to rule out as much as possible of e.g. the "lip-service" on the one hand and "provocation" on the other. Karin Hake maintains this when discussing methodology on child research:

*It is difficult to talk about one particular and universal child perspective. Instead, one should try to see the world as it looks like through the eyes of children. The child perspective is something that adult researchers try to get hold of. Children themselves are not able to reflect on the child perspective, they are part of it. Therefore, one has to try very systematically to find out how children look at the world.*⁵⁴

We take the information from the children as their subjective understanding and reactions on the issues being considered, knowing that they expose their competencies as children. Therefore, for us it is vital to get hold of children's and young people's own subjective interpretations as data important in their own right. This is very well put by James and Prout:

*Childhood and children's social relationship and culture are worthy of study in their own right, and not just in respect to their social construction by adults. This means that children are and must be seen as actively involved in the construction and determination of their own social lives.*⁵⁵

As we are focusing on the children as receivers, and their interpretations of and reactions to the messages they receive from the "parallel school", our research belongs to the approach in audience research called "reception analysis" (see 1.2).

However, our research will, in addition to drawing lines to the research tradition of reception theory and text analysis, also relate to the uses and gratification studies. The latter one concentrates to a great extent to how a person uses the content of the media and how different kinds of the media content might give satisfaction to the motives and needs of the individual. The perspective will be moved from the receiver as a passive respondent to an active participant in the communication process. The uses and gratification studies will to a great extent involve a psychological perspective to explain a person's use of media.⁵⁶ To pay attention to people's expectations to different kinds of media and what kind of wishes and motives people seek to have fulfilled through their use of media, is an interesting aspect of the uses and gratification theory. This process is linked to both socio-cultural and psychological factors which Palmgren, Wenner and Rosengren express in this way:

*The gratification processes are seen as taking place within a field of interaction between societal structures and individual characteristics, an interaction calling forward specific realization of the potentials and restrictions inherent in those structures.*⁵⁷

The emphasis of the uses- and gratification studies on strategic choices and rationalism in relation to the possibilities the different media give can be said to be an intentional way of explanation rather than a functional. In our research, having pupils, parents and teachers answer questions about their media use, we will have to pay attention to the uses and

⁵⁴ Karin Hake: *Barn og unges fjernsynsverden. Et utviklingsperspektiv*. Oslo: Ad Notam Gyldendal, 1998, p.50.

⁵⁵ Quoted from Karin Hake, "Fjernsynets fascinasjonskraft", op.cit. p. 13.

⁵⁶ Ola Erstad (ed.) *Vitenskapsteori og medieforskning*. Report no. 12. Oslo: Department of Media and Communication, University of Oslo, 1993, pp. 44-45.

⁵⁷ Quoted from Ola Erstad, *ibid.* p. 46.

gratification studies, especially when seeking to understand why people choose different programs.⁵⁸

Our data collection procedure will be explained in some detail later in this chapter.

2.2.2 Selection of respondents

Mainly due to practical reasons, we chose to carry out our project within seven municipalities in the county of Møre og Romsdal. The researchers Asbjørn Simonnes and Gudmund Gjelsten live and work in this particular region of Western Norway. Another reason was that the county of Møre og Romsdal had decided to become a “value county”, appointing a regional committee on value issues consisting of politicians from various political parties.⁵⁹ The municipalities chosen were interested in becoming “value municipalities”, and therefore appointed local committees to discuss value issues. Our project, however, is operating on an independent basis as a project in the Welfare program within the Research Council of Norway. The process of getting permission from the regional and local school authorities and from parents to conduct our research was facilitated by a positive recommendation of the project by the regional state director of education in Møre og Romsdal, Elen Lein.

The municipalities we have selected represent urban, rural/semi-rural, agricultural and industrial areas. This is done to avoid obtaining a very homogenous sample with regard to social background. Within each municipality groups of 6th graders (11-12 years old) and 10th graders (15-16 years old) have participated. The groups were school classes from one or more schools in the municipality. Which schools and classes were to participate have been selected mostly for practical reasons.

We feel that even geographically very limited and local research projects may provide important contributions as a basis for media education discussions and reflections. On the other hand, our way of selecting respondents limits the possibility to generalize the results of our research. This issue is discussed later in the chapter.

In addition to the children, we have used teachers and parents of the children as informants. This is done mainly in order to obtain an adult perspective on some of the same issues. To some degree, adult answers may be used as a control of the information given by children on factual topics. Moreover, responses given by the adults will be part of the basis for dealing with the issues in Problem area C.

2.2.3 Questionnaires and interviews

In our attempt to map down how children and young people experience being exposed to media and computer products, we wanted to combine quantitative and qualitative methods. Questionnaires were given to pupils on both grade levels, and to their teachers and parents.

The children filled in the questionnaires in a classroom situation, without prior orientation apart from practical details. Two of the researchers were present in the classroom when they worked on the questionnaires, answering questions about filling-in procedures. Most questions came from the 11 year-olds, fewer from the 16 year-olds. 291 6th-graders and 212 10th-graders participated in this part of the study. This represents about 94 % participation in

⁵⁸ Ibid. p. 47. For further reading see also Leah A. Lievrouw and Sonia Livingstone (eds.): Handbook of New Media. Social Shaping and Consequences of ICTs. London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: Sage Publication, 2002.

⁵⁹ This was a result of the Norwegian Government having appointed a national Commission on Human Values, encouraging counties, municipalities and private groups to discuss what they thought should be the base values in society facing a new millennium.

the 6th grades and about 91 % in the 10th grades. Those few missing were absent for normal reasons like illness.

Questionnaires were given to teachers directly connected with the classes selected, and to the principals. 106 teachers and administrative personnel filled in the questionnaires. All the parents got a questionnaire in a sealed envelope by mail. Some of them had children in both age groups. 301 parents responded, which represents at least about 60 % replies.

About three months later the two researchers visited the schools once again. This time the school visits started out by showing of a video-episode of the most popular TV-series among the actual age group in Møre og Romsdal, respectively *Hotel Caesar* for the 6th-graders and *Friends* for the 10th-graders. Immediately after the showing, the pupils filled in a pre-prepared literacy analysis form, to conduct an analysis of the program they had just seen. After the papers had been handed in, fruit was served and an informal discussion on the program followed. After a break, the “in-depth interviews” were conducted. 47 pupils were interviewed. Later, interviews with teachers and parents were arranged. 42 teachers and 31 parents were interviewed. As the interviewees were selected among those willing to volunteer, we cannot claim the interview group to be representative of the questionnaire group.

The main issues covered by the various data collection procedures are shown in table 1.⁶⁰

As already mentioned, making a questionnaire that aims to elicit cognitive and emotional reactions, is a highly demanding task. We gave priority to adapting the formulation of the questions to the age group, rather than to equal formulation at both grade levels, even if it interferes with the possibilities of direct comparison of answers between the two age groups. Several persons were consulted during the preparation process, and drafts of the questionnaires were tested out on children of the same age groups. In the late summer of 2000, the researchers Asbjørn Simonnes and Gudmund Gjelsten, together with sociologist Tore Hagen, critically scrutinized the final drafts before printing out the questionnaires.

The same researchers were involved in the preparation of the interview guides late in 2000 and early in 2001. The analysis form was prepared by the researchers Asbjørn Simonnes and Gudmund Gjelsten.

As a service to the participating municipalities we promised to come back and report our preliminary findings with reference to their particular community. This has been done by Asbjørn Simonnes and Gudmund Gjelsten.

Copies of questionnaires and interview guides are shown in appendices.

To what degree we may have succeeded, through these data collection procedures, to map down how children and young people experience being exposed to media and computer products, will be discussed later in the chapter, under the heading “Validity issues”.

⁶⁰ In additions, the questionnaire to the pupils included a few questions about their leisure activities and their view of bullying. The answer to these questions are not dealt with in this report.

Table 1. Overview of data collection procedures.

	Questionnaire, Sept-Dec 2000	Interview, Feb-April 2001	Literacy analysis form, Feb-April 2001
6 th graders 11-12 years old	Information about yourself. Media equipment and use of the media in the home. Use of media outside the home and school. School and visual media use. Favorite TV programs. The visual media and their influence. Attitudes to the visual media. Values in the media and values in school.	Media and leisure activities. The content of media programs. Values in school and values in the media. Media and advertising.	The goal of the program, and the target age group. Experiences of the persons in the program. Emotional reactions to the program. Values in the program and values in school Wish for changes in the program
10 th graders 15-16 years old	Information about yourself. Media equipment and use of the media in the home. Use of media outside the home and school. School and visual media use. Favorite TV programs. The visual media and their influence. Attitudes to the visual media. Values in the media and values in school.	Media and leisure activities. The content of media programs. Values in school and values in the media. Media and school. Media and advertising.	The goal of the program, and the target age group. Experiences of the persons in the program. Emotional reactions to the program. Values in the program and values in school. Wish for changes in the program.
Parents	Information about your family. Media equipment and the use of the media in the home. Your own information/knowledge and experience of the media. Values in the home and values in the media. The home in a media society.	Media in the family's daily life. The content of the media programs. Values in the media and values in the home. Media and advertising.	
Teachers	Personal information. Thoughts regarding the relation between school and the visual media. Values in school and values in the media. The role of the teacher in a media society.	The school and media. Values in school, in homes and in the media. The content of media programs.	

2.2.4 Data analysis

The questionnaire data were processed by means of the SPSS, statistical program package, version 11.0 for Windows.

In accordance with our research problem, the focus is on the main trends of the results from the questionnaires and the literacy analysis forms. Tables and graphs are presented, to show “typical” and less typical answers from the two age groups. For the most part, results are expressed as percentages for the total age group. In some cases where it seems to be of special interest, results for boys and girls are kept apart. Differences between boys and girls are in some cases tested for significance, using Kendall’s tau,⁶¹ It should be noted that this use of significance testing has nothing to do with statistical generalization to any specified population. It is just a way to make a decision about whether a difference between boys and girls is of a size making it worth an interpretation, or not. Such significance testing of differences between age groups has not been done. A main reason for this decision is that the questions in many cases are differently formulated to the two age groups.

We do not present research for single municipalities, or for types of municipalities. The reason is that the trends are very much alike in the different municipalities. To some degree, this fact gives reason to believe that our data are reasonably representative for the whole county of Møre and Romsdal. This argument will be elaborated on later in this chapter.

There are noteworthy individual differences among the pupils. Saying, for example, that the 12 years old is such or such, would be an unforgivable simplification. Nevertheless, this report focuses on the main trends, trying to keep an eye on the variation, too. A closer study of the variation among pupils in their reactions to media, relating this variation in reactions to differences in for example home-related variables, would be desirable. However, as that kind of research problems were not in focus when the questionnaires were constructed, our data are only partly suited for such a study.

Data from the qualitative interviews are primarily used as a support of and a corrective to the quantitative data. Being able to combine the questionnaire data and the interview data from the same pupil, we may compare answers from the questionnaire with the answers from the same pupil being interviewed, to get more information about the validity of the answers. As a whole, the qualitative data give support to the quantitative data, and in some instances the qualitative data illuminate unclear points in the quantitative data.

We do not give a systematic presentation of the total qualitative data material, searching for main trends in the interview data or something like that. The reason is that the interview data are given by a smaller, and probably less representative, group than the questionnaire data.

In accordance with our research focus, data from adult persons are given less attention. Nevertheless, these data play an important role in our comparisons of a child perspective and an adult perspective on the media. Besides, data from the adults have been handled the same way as data from the children. We have not made significance tests between adult data and children’s data, mainly because of many questions being differently formulated.

⁶¹ See for example, Marija N. Norušis: *SPSS/PC+™ for the IBM PC/XT/AT*. Chicago, Illinois: SPSS Inc., 1986.

2.2.5 Some validity issues

Modern texts on research methodology emphasize that validity is a property of inferences or interpretations, and *not* a property of data or methods as such.⁶² The question of the relevance of different aspects of validity depends on what kinds of *inferences* are drawn in a given research, rather than on what types of methods are used.

Interpreting our results, we make inferences about children's (and adults') views and opinions, on the basis of their specific answers in a questionnaire and/or an interview. For example, we want to make inferences about pupils' attitudes to visual media and their view of the values communicated in such media. Being unable to measure such invisible concepts directly, we have to make inferences about them on the basis of indicators available from the data. The validity of such inferences is usually called *construct validity*.⁶³

Construct validity may be reduced by "construct under-representation" as well as by "construct irrelevance".⁶⁴ "Construct under-representation" arises from the fact that we cannot through observable indicators catch the complete content of a principally immeasurable construct. "Construct irrelevance" refers to the problem that some of the indicators used may be more or less irrelevant to the construct. For example, a response interpreted as an expression of the pupil's attitude to the media, may to some degree be influenced by a wish to pay lip service to adult expectations or to provoke adults. Another problem may be possible discrepancies between the real attitudes of pupils and what they are able to express through their answers. Maybe they are not themselves fully conscious of their own attitudes and reactions, for example with regard to commercials in the media and to what degree they are influenced by them.

In addition, there is always a danger that construct validity may be reduced because of "random errors"⁶⁵. This group of errors is treated in chapters on "reliability" in traditional psychometric textbooks. Some questions in the questionnaire may have been misinterpreted by some of the respondents. Maybe some pupils do not care to work thoroughly through the whole questionnaire, and mark some of the questions at random. Misunderstandings may occur in the interview situations too, but an interview situation provides a greater possibility to uncover and correct the misunderstanding. Furthermore, if the pupils should happen to have been watching for example a special program or movie a short time before the response is given, such an incident may have influenced their responses.

Systematic and random errors of these kinds are possible threats to construct validity in our research, as they in principle always are in any social research. To what degree we have succeeded in mapping down how children and young people experience being exposed to media and computer products, depends on our dealing with possible errors of these two kinds. Construct validity is a property of the interpretations which are made on the basis of data, not a property of the quality of the data as such.

⁶² See, for example, J. A. Maxwell. "Understanding and Validity in Qualitative Research." In Harvard Educational Review, 62, 1992, pp. 279-300; Samuel Messick., "Validity of Psychological Assessment." In American Psychologist, 50, 1995, pp. 741-749; William R. Shadish, Thomas D. Cook and Donald T. Campbell. Experimental and Quasi-experimental Designs for Generalized Causal Inference. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2002.

⁶³ See, for example Messick, op.cit., or Shadish et al. op.cit.

⁶⁴ Messick, op.cit.

⁶⁵ See, for example, Charles M. Judd, Eliot R. Smith and Louise H. Kidder. Research Methods in Social Relations. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1991; Thor Arnfinn Kleven. "Begrepsoperasjonalisering." In Lund, Thorleif (ed.): Innføring i forskningsmetodologi. Oslo: Unipub, 2002, pp. 141-183.

As already mentioned, several steps were taken during the construction of the questionnaire to prevent misunderstandings. In the planning and implementation of the procedure of data collection, we made efforts to provide a setting where the respondents feel safe to give honest answers. Nevertheless, throughout our presentation and interpretation of our results, we necessarily have to keep a sharp lookout for the risk of “construct under-representation” and “construct irrelevance”.

Another important validity issue in our research is the issue of *external validity*. This issue has to do with generalizing or transferring results to other contexts than the context of the investigation.

This investigation has been done within seven municipalities in the county of Møre and Romsdal. The municipalities were not randomly selected within this county, we aimed at selecting municipalities with different characteristics. As a consequence, our investigation does not allow statistical generalization, a problem our investigation shares with most social research. If we were to interpret our results as representative for the entire county of Møre and Romsdal, we would not be able to specify the degree of uncertainty of such a generalization.

However, there is no reason to consider the investigation just as a narrative about some pupils on some places at a given point of time. In social research most of the issues regarding generalization have to be discussed on a rational basis, considering different factors weighing for and against the transferring of results to other contexts. We have already mentioned that the trends in our results are very much alike in the different municipalities. Remembering that the sample was selected with the purpose of getting a varied representation of municipalities with regard to e.g. density of population and the source of income, this fact gives some support to an assumption that the trends are reasonably valid for the whole county of Møre and Romsdal.

What then about transferring the results to other Norwegian counties? On the one hand, there is no reason to believe that children and youth in Møre and Romsdal differ very much from children and youth in other parts of Norway. On the other hand, differences in access to media- and computer products and to other leisure activities may influence the results. For example, the use of TV channels will be limited to those which are actually available. Probably we would have obtained other percentages if our investigation had included our larger cities where cable-TV density is high. Anyhow, considering the rapid development of the media industry, there is good reason to believe that such particular results will be out of date in a short time. New empirical investigations are the only way to keep informed about this.

Summing up about external validity, we can say that the particular findings in this investigation should be considered valid primarily within the context where they have been collected. Transferring the percentage figures to other contexts would be a very uncertain task. Other results and “insights” from the investigation, for example conclusions about differences between age groups, will probably be transferable with a smaller degree of uncertainty. However, to the degree that we make inferences about differences between groups, the issue of *statistical validity*⁶⁶ is relevant. We then run the risk of attaching meaning to group differences which are too small to have any importance. Testing of statistical significance helps us to avoid over-interpreting differences which are so small that they probably might occur by chance in a sample of this size.

⁶⁶ Thomas D. Cook and Donald T. Campbell. *Quasi-experimentation. Design & Analysis Issues for Field Settings*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1979.

Our empirical research is mainly descriptive. The design does not allow conclusions about causality. Nevertheless, our interest, and probably that of the readers, lies in the inferences which may be drawn from the research, rather than in the figures themselves. The results have to be interpreted to be able to give meaning to us. To the degree that this interpretation process moves the researchers (or the readers) from descriptive thinking to making inferences about causes and effects, *internal validity*⁶⁷ is an important concern. In any evaluation of the effects of intentional activity like teaching and upbringing, the issue of internal validity is of great importance. Our challenge is to be aware of and to discuss alternative interpretations, and on a rational basis give the premises for our conclusions.

⁶⁷ See, for example, Shadish et al. Experimental and Quasi-experimental Designs for Generalized Causal Inference, op.cit.

Chapter 3: Values in school and media

In this section we shall attempt to obtain a more precise picture of each of the two value profiles we are trying to compare, the values found in the L97 curriculum and the value profile of media productions. Part of this analysis will include a critical assessment of the research and the public debate related to these issues. We shall also give a more detailed treatment of some of the most important value terms such as tolerance, convictions, human dignity, solidarity, freedom of expression, freedom in education, and problem solving.

We shall define the entities which are the environments where the children we are researching are living, comparing the characteristic value profile of the Norwegian public school with the value profile of the parallel school of the media.

Our reflections on the value profile of the Norwegian public school are based on the value descriptions in L97. On the media side, we base our analysis on episodes from two TV series, those being the two most popular series among the relevant age groups at the actual time. It should be noticed that we compare prescriptions for the school with actual TV episodes. This strategy is chosen partly for practical reasons. We have not been able in this project to make “field trips” into teaching situations in classrooms. On the other hand, the parallel school of the media has no common ethical guidelines underlying their production. However, our strategy has not been chosen for practical reasons alone. L97 expresses what the Norwegian society wants the school to be, what values are to guide the life in school and to be promoted through the school. We find it of great interest to compare the values actually promoted through the parallel school of the media with the values the Norwegian society wants to be developed in our children in school. To the extent a discrepancy is found, it should be thought provoking. There may be different opinions in our society about the desirability of giving the media binding ethical guidelines. Some people will argue that the media industry is in no way responsible for contributing to the value education of the children. On the other hand, if the influence of the TV programs most popular among children turns out to be in conflict with the values the Norwegian society wants to promote in school, there is reason to discuss what consequences this might have for children.

In addition, as L97 functions both as a manual for teachers and as a legally binding directive regarding the content of teaching, there is no reason to think that there intentionally is much discrepancy between the values in L97 and the values in actual teaching in the classrooms. However, the key findings of the evaluation of Reform 97 show that there are great variations between classes with regard to the implementation of the goals set in L97. The research leader of the evaluation of Reform 97, Peder Haug, comments on the role of competencies:

Competence may have several meanings in this context. Firstly, it concerns how personally suited to teaching each individual teacher may be. This varies, but without a doubt there are those who should not have become teachers. Secondly, there is the question of whether the teachers master the knowledge, skills and the methods that are meant to be used. In many subjects at the upper form level, there is a lack of teachers with adequate formal qualifications in a number of key subjects.⁶⁸

With regard to education about values there might be a similar variation of implementation between different classes. As mentioned earlier we must keep in mind that when the children compare the values in school and the values in the media (see chapter 4), they base their

⁶⁸ Peder Haug: The Evaluation of Reform 97. Key Findings. Oslo: The Norwegian Research Council, 2003.

views on the values in school on what they are actually taught in classroom settings and in various textbook presentations.

3.1 The rights of parents regarding the education and upbringing of their children ⁶⁹

European human rights promoters have been eager in defining what human rights implies in the teaching practice in countries that are members of the UN. Three organizations – European Forum for Freedom in Education, EFFE, Organisation Internationale pour le Développement de la Liberté D’enseignement, OIDEL, and World University Service, WUS – have jointly collected declarations and conventions on freedom of education and freedom in education. We contend that these values mentioned above are also the base of Norwegian public school teaching, which are taught as a part of compulsory education.⁷⁰

Studying L97 we, as researchers, use the *printed* version (English translation, comparing it with the Norwegian text). The pupils, however, use as the basis for their assessment of values in L97, as pointed out earlier, the classroom teaching experience and the presentation in textbooks.

In this EFFE publication we find the following reflections:

The right to education and the freedom of education belong to the basic human rights and freedoms and to the fundamentals of democratic society. The educated individual person is a precondition for the exercise of civil and political rights. The ability to make use of personal interests and rights requires appropriate skills and knowledge. Consequently special attention has been paid to the right to education and the freedom of education since their first codifications. At present they have frequently been taken into consideration in international declarations and conventions.

These basic rights and freedoms comprise classical liberal, defensive rights as well as modern social, claiming rights:

- *In the meaning of a classical liberal right the right to education implies defense against the State. The State has to guarantee the free development of personality by education and is not (or only to a restricted and exactly defined extent) allowed to infringe, hinder or restrict this right.*
- *To make use of the right to education appropriate educational possibilities are necessary. Consequently, the right to education is also a social right which implies a claim against the State. The State has to ensure an adequate educational system either by providing its own educational institutions and/or by enabling the existence of private institutions.*⁷¹

This strong stress on both the right to education and the freedom of education, is not just a challenge to the state and its politicians. It is also a challenge to the mighty mass media industry which is based on the right to freedom of expression. Is the mass media industry really concerned with the right to education and the freedom of education or does it pursue its own freedom, ignoring the educational responsibility of society in general? This is a key issue

⁶⁹ The term “child” in our research is understood to mean persons up to 18 years of age, which is the definition used by UNESCO. Sometimes we add the term “young people”, but in our context it means “older children” within the limit of 18 years of age.

⁷⁰ Fernandez and Jenkner (eds.): International Declarations and Conventions on the Right to Education and the Freedom in Education, op.cit.

⁷¹ Ibid. p. 11.

in any society where the mass media represent a dominating informational and, in a general sense, educational institution.

How binding are the many fine international codifications of the rights to education and the freedom of education?

The weakness of the international codifications lies in their degree of binding character. Some of them have only declamatory character (like the UN-Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the resolutions of the European Parliament), whereas others (like UN-Covenants and Conventions) oblige the signatory States...

*Consequently the complete realization of the right to education and the freedom of education is left to the discretion of every single State. Nevertheless these international documents gain significance and are helpful in national discussions.*⁷²

Looking at the Covenant and Convention texts collected in the book from which we have just quoted, we find some key statements and documents on education which are of a binding character:

- *The liberty of parents to ensure the religious and moral education of their children in conformity with their own convictions (International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights 1966)*
- *Compulsory and free primary education available to all, and progressive free education at higher levels (International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights 1966)*
- *Elimination of educational and all other forms of discrimination against women (Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women 1979)*
- *Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)*
- *Convention against the Discrimination in Education (UNESCO 1960)*⁷³

Studying international documents on education, we must also bear in mind that the ideals so strongly and solemnly declared in the UN-Universal Declaration of Human Rights are baked into the UN-Charter as its underlying ideology. We should further observe that the term "universal" is an integral part of the UN philosophy regarding the scope of human rights, the scope is worldwide.

A central part of human rights is obviously the right to and freedom of education. Without an educated public, all talk about democracy will be reduced to an empty slogan. The Norwegian Government is actively planning for a life long learning opportunity for all segments of the population. Central in this new effort is to provide competency in using digital and ICT technologies in acquiring knowledge and information for as many as possible.⁷⁴

The documents referred to above, have all been ratified by Norway. These documents demand that educational institutions at all levels are available. Furthermore, it is expected that freedom in education is being provided. This includes giving parents freedom of choice with regard to sending their children to public schools or private schools. Regardless of public or private schools the contents of the teaching should not violate basic and universal human rights.

⁷² Ibid. p. 13.

⁷³ Ibid. pp. 18,19,24,29,35.

⁷⁴ For further information we refer to www.utdanning.no and press releases of September 1 and October 8, 2003.

3.2 Homes as particular value units

The right of parents to have their own religious, ideological and political convictions, means that each family, mother father and children, represents a miniature society with their own particular views on values. This also includes ideas about how to practice these values as a part of their everyday life as a family. In a multicultural situation, something we experience more and more also in Norway, family values represent, from a sociological point of view, a variety of subcultures. Human rights protect the existence of such subcultures. As we have seen there are a series of international documents that protect the parents and the children regarding their right to education and freedom in education. But families certainly do not have the right to disregard and violate the rights and freedoms of other persons, near or far away. We have to coexist with each other on this small globe by respecting the basic UN Conventions on Human Rights, which includes the protection of the right of *all* families to live in peace and security.

The role of the UDHR in a world of many values and cultural traditions in general, is commented on by Professor Janne Haaland Matlary in the following way:

*I think we must hold on the Universal Declaration as the prime source of all human rights, and to the view that this is the only fully representative and solemn text on this subject. Everything must emanate from this text. The 1966 conventions are elaborations on the latter, and do not contradict it... Then, one must argue logically: that the rights are a whole, where these rights are balanced against each other... Human rights are a whole not an a la carte menu.*⁷⁵

The world is far away from practicing these ideal rights. But, as mentioned before, it is after all better to have some ideals, which unfortunately often are being broken, than to have no such ideals codified, whether it be as unbinding declarations or binding conventions. We then have the possibility to fight for the implementation of those ideals, that we so often see being violated.

3.3 Values in the Norwegian public school

Focusing on some of the specific value competences L97 intend to teach:

- *The spiritual human being*

The original Norwegian formulation is different from the English translation. Why has this been done? Might it be an interpretation of the term used in the Norwegian text? The original text says: The meaning-seeking human being. This text, found in the Norwegian version, states the universal observation that humans ask the deep philosophical question of the purpose of human existence. The English translation is closer to a Christian theological way of phrasing the particularity of a human person. The text in the English version is more like the heading proposed in an early draft of the Norwegian text: The moral human being.⁷⁶ The heading in the English version also more strongly emphasizes the uniqueness of man. But both headings, the Norwegian original and the different heading used in the English version, underline the uniqueness and dignity of the human being.

⁷⁵ Professor Janne Haaland Matlary; Department of Political Science and International Politics, University of Oslo in a lecture March, 2002. Quoted from Asbjørn Simønnes and Gudmund Gjelsten (eds.): Mass Media Communication and the Intentional Education in School and Family. Report from a seminar at the Institute for Educational Research, University of Oslo, March 21. Volda: Høgskulen i Volda, 2002, p. 42.

⁷⁶ Theo Koritzinsky, op.cit. p. 98.

- *The creative human being*

In this part three particular areas of creativity are pointed out. Men and women have in their daily work invented and improved their lot through **practical insight and ingenuity**. The next area is **theoretical development through scientific experiments and logical reflections**. The third, and last, area mentioned is the artistic ability of humans that we meet in our cultural tradition mediated by body and mind. **Education should help develop human creativity including critical thinking. The ethical implications of human creativity and development must also be reflected on in the teaching.**

- *The working human being*

This portion underlines the general place of work in human existence. Technology has given us improvements, more spare time, more welfare etc. It has also given us more problems e.g. pollution of the environment, the atomic bomb, the possibility of biological warfare etc. Education shall help pupils to understand the importance of all kinds of productive work. **Education in classrooms and training in real work-like settings shall help children and young people to learn good work habits.** Cooperation and teamwork, between teacher and pupil, between pupils, and between schools, homes and local community are strongly stressed.

- *The liberally-educated human being*

Schooling shall provide a multifaceted and all-round general education. The international culture of learning links humanity together through the development and use of new knowledge to better the human condition. The increasing specialization and complexity of the global community requires a deeper familiarity with the main currents and traditional tones of our Norwegian culture. The expansion of knowledge, moreover, demands heightened awareness of the values that must guide our choices.

- *The social human being*

It is important to exploit the school as a community for the development of social skills. The closed peer culture of the pupils must, in a careful way, be encountered with an adult, more comprehensive and mature view on the role and responsibility of social life.

- *The environmentally-aware human being*

In recent years there has become a growing awareness of the vulnerability of planet earth due to an ecological imbalance. Technology has helped us in many ways but it also represents a threat to the total well-being of the environment. Suddenly ethics has become a burning issue in the debate about the future. Conflicting interests create tension. **New generations must be educated to become environmentally-aware individuals.**

- *The integrated human being*

This is meant to be a summing up of the previous partial descriptions of challenges for persons in an educational setting. On the one hand the individual right to independence and an individual development. On the other hand responsibility towards other persons and to the local, national and international community.

Some feel that these ideals contradict each other to such a degree that it creates confusion both in teachers and pupils. We certainly see the tensions described, but does not this tension give a fairly accurate description of what it involves to be a human in a multicultural environment? It is the plight of man to live in this dual conflict between individual priorities and to balance these priorities for the sake of the welfare of others. This is a healthy tension,

not least for those of us who live in an affluent society. It should make us value conscious like never before. And this definitely needs to be taught and discussed in our schools.

3.3.1 The above values presented in more everyday ethical consequences

We observe that in all these seven definitions of various aspects of human values, there are certain common themes underlying them all. Norwegian teachers are obliged to teach in accordance with the L97 directives, also as far as values are concerned. Trying to sum up some of these common value themes in L97, we find that these involve at least the following terms:

- Equal opportunity for all
- Human dignity
- Tolerance
- Solidarity towards persons in trouble or need
- Positive attitudes towards conflict-solving through dialogue
- Building relationships through a caring understanding
- Responsibility for society and environment (civic transformation)
- Honesty (truth-telling)
- Spirituality (in search of purpose in existence)

3.3.2 Some of the most central value terms for our research

Even though we are looking for all types of values, we especially want to take a closer look at persons' views and practice regarding attitudes, relationships, tolerance and problem-solving. These are key elements for creating human communities, for human communities to function and to be sustained. An honest human encounter in a communicative dialogue, in mutual respect, is necessary to build sound societies. Truth and trust are the very foundations on which human communities should be built and sustained. Therefore, the terms listed above are fundamental in both an educational and a communication context.

We shall now take a closer look at each of these four values: attitudes, relationships, tolerance and problem-solving with a special emphasis on tolerance.

Attitude

Attitude indicates a set of mind, cognitively and emotionally towards persons or situations. Webster's Dictionary defines attitude as follows: Manner, disposition, feeling, position etc. with regard to a person, or a thing, tendency or orientation, especially of the mind.⁷⁷

Attitudes function as a kind of personal archive system which provides mental security and enables perception and evaluations to function continuously and consistently. Attitudes are closely connected to the way in which children and adolescents acquire values and images from the different arenas of socialization.⁷⁸ One important arena in the socialization process for attitude formation is the impulses from visual media products, in addition to the home, school and the peer-group.

⁷⁷ Webster's Dictionary. New Revised Edition, New York, London, 1996, p. 96.

⁷⁸ Gjelsten and Simonnes: *Å vekse opp i eit mediesamfunn*, op.cit. pp. 112-114.

Relationship

The definition of the term relationship in Webster's Dictionary is: "Connection, association, involvement, an emotional or other connection between people."⁷⁹ The ultimate goal of all teaching and all types of communication is to create contact and connection between people. Therefore it is of utmost importance that both teaching and mass communication have an honest and mutual communicative profile that can foster sound relationships. At the heart of most conflicts are broken relationships.

Tolerance

We live in a world where persons and situations are different. There are ethnic, cultural, religious, ideological, political, and many other differences in local societies, and in nations all over the world. Difference makes it a must to learn to tolerate others in a world where we are forced to coexist with all our differences. Michael Walzer puts it in this way:

*Toleration makes difference possible, difference makes toleration necessary. A defense of toleration doesn't have to be a defense of difference. It can be, and often is, nothing more than an argument from necessity.*⁸⁰

Walzer maintains that "our actual manyness" demands toleration if we are to coexist in a civilized manner. He continues:

*My subject is toleration – or, perhaps better, the peaceful coexistence of groups of people with different histories, cultures, and identities, which is what toleration makes possible.*⁸¹

Toleration then is the practice of tolerance. The latter refers to attitudes, emotions as well as to philosophical reflections on the issue of how to understand and face difference. What then does the map of tolerance, the theories behind our acts of toleration, look like?

Imagine that we draw a line where strong opinions/convictions are at the one end, and no opinions/convictions at the other. In the present philosophical climate of the Western world, it often happens that those with strong convictions, religious or otherwise, automatically are labeled as intolerant persons. It is important to bear in mind that the UDHR accepts convictions and allegiances as central human rights. This right also includes sharing of these conviction and allegiances with others without being persecuted or prosecuted. It also expects that those who enjoy such rights, must tolerate that these same rights should be given to all others. Toleration is a minimum requirement of the UDHR. But in discussions about tolerance, at all levels, attitudes come to the surface which often reveal shallow theoretical reflections. For some, tolerance is defined as accepting all views and convictions as equally true. This is relativism rather than tolerance. There is no need for tolerance when there are no convictions to protect. If we define tolerance as an open-minded respectful attitude towards those with whom we are in serious disagreement, then tolerance becomes very demanding and challenging. This implies facing differences with a consciously emotional and cognitive involvement. In fact real dialogue between persons requires identity and integrity on both sides. Otherwise the dialogue becomes an empty and superficial chat. However, it is interesting to observe that some of those who proclaim to have no strong opinions and convictions, still seem to have one strong conviction. For others to have convictions in a multicultural society, surely means being intolerant.

⁷⁹ Webster's Dictionary, op.cit. p. 1211.

⁸⁰ Michael Walzer: *On Toleration*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1997, p. xii.

⁸¹ *Ibid.* p. 2.

This is not true. A person with no firm convictions may be tolerant or intolerant, the same may be the case for those with strong convictions. Walzer in a pragmatic way comments on the toleration situation and writes:

*We should aim at something better...something beyond toleration, something like mutual respect. Mutual respect is one of the attitudes that makes for toleration – the most attractive attitude, perhaps, but not necessarily the most likely to develop or most stable over time.*⁸²

It is very important for all of us to see the need for toleration when facing differences. It is also important to understand that behind tolerate actions there are various theoretical reflections on what true tolerance implies. This is surely an important teaching issue, as well as a challenging topic for an accurate presentation in the media.

Problem solving

Most of the latter half of the twentieth century was dominated by the cold war, local conflicts involving terrorist attacks, by supporters called liberation fighters, and a growing number of criminal acts. Political groups, left and right, often felt that the use of sabotage, taking hostages were legitimate strategies and tactics for achieving their immediate and long range goals. These trends continue into the twenty-first century.

In our country the growth of crime is a great concern. But there are many other types of conflict creating situations, such as a growing number of families experiencing divorce, and the problem of discipline in schools etc. In media presentations where problems are solved through violence, may give children a wrong understanding of how to solve conflicts. Why are there so few programs in public media showing problem-solving through dialogue? Our data have given us valuable insight into how children view and react to these issues (see chapter 4). Some TV- and computer games have problem-solving that involve moral considerations as an integral part of the plot, even when the total setting is quite violent.

3.4 Values in the media

Is it really possible to talk about values in the media in general terms? One may maintain that each author of a book or an article, a scriptwriter for a movie or a television play, each producer and editor communicates their own individual brand of values. There are no such things as value documents of a binding character for those working in the media industry. There certainly are some practical moral guidelines for media professionals prepared by the media industry itself. In a democratic society these guidelines are very liberally interpreted. Commercial and marketing considerations often blur the implementation of even minimal moral obligations. The very important role of being a critical voice in the public debate may degenerate into irresponsible gossiping, and empty entertainment presentations. Some presentations are not just immoral judged by the standards taught in homes and schools, they are actually amoral, completely leaving out moral considerations.

A media analyst and a media pedagogue, John Pungente, says, commenting on the general quality of entertainment programs on TV:

Ninety per cent of TV may be junk, but the other ten per cent can be educational, entertaining, and worth watching. We should work on that excellent ten per cent, encourage it, and do what needs to be done to make the ninety per cent worthwhile. What I hope for -it may take decades – is that we can build an audience whose critical

⁸² Ibid. p. 52.

*sense is such that it demands better programs. And that some of these media-educated people will go on to produce and create excellent TV programs in the future.*⁸³

These comments come from a man who has traveled all around the world to look at the quality of television programs. His main concern on his round the world trip, however, was to find out what the educationalists of the various countries were doing with regard to media education. He also stresses that the modern media technology as such is neutral, it can either be used in a destructive or a constructive way. We find no empirical evidence to substantiate the percentages with which he operates. We admit that the real value of the figures quoted, is limited to being the assumptions of a man with broad general insights into the subject he is discussing. Therefore his views are interesting as a competent person's assessment of a situation very difficult to map down empirically.

The fact remains that media professionals, as far as values are concerned, have the right to operate in a very independent way in a democratic society, as long as they do not violate any laws.

This fact that the media professionals, in principle, are independent of general ethical norms, is in itself a basic value difference as compared to the education in homes and schools, where specific values are being upheld and taught. The intentional school is value-based, the "parallel school" of the media is, in principle, value-free. However, to be value-free does not imply being value-neutral. Therefore there is a profound principal difference between the intentional school of our country and the "parallel school" of the media. This principal difference has to do with values.

The debate on the values in the media, and the relationship between the media and politics, has a long history. This history is explained in some detail in a paper presented at an international conference on "Marginalization and Social Exclusion" in May 2003.⁸⁴

3.4.1 Communication rights for non-professionals in the information society

The UN World Summit on the Information Society took place in Geneva in December 2003. The journal Media Development, in an article in 2002, contends that, according to the preparatory documents for this conference, the communication perspective and the right of all to be a part of the communication process in modern information societies, seem to be left out. Professor Cees J. Hamelink, Amsterdam comments:

*There is in current public debate, policy and practice a strong emphasis on the importance of information and information technology. The forthcoming United Nations World Summit on the Information Society (Geneva, 2003) stresses the prospect of future societies as "information societies". It is disconcerting that most of the preparatory documents for the United Nations World Summit on the Information Society, "communication" has practically disappeared.... In fact for the resolution for the world's most pressing problems we do not need more information processing, but the capacity to communicate.... In complex modern societies we need urgently to communicate with each other.*⁸⁵

⁸³ John J. Pungente and Martin O'Malley: More Than Meets The Eye – Watching Television Watching Us, Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Inc., 1999, p. 3.

⁸⁴ Asbjørn Simønnes and Gudmund Gjelsten: "The Term 'Social Exclusion' Considered from a Communication Theory Perspective." Paper at The International Research Conference on Marginalization and Social Exclusion, Ålesund/Norway, May 2003.

⁸⁵ Media Development. Journal of The World Association for Christian Communication, no. 4, 2002, p. 42.

The rights for the professionals to communicate in the information society are accepted. But the question about the rights of non-professionals to be a part of the communication process in the information society, certainly needs to be placed on the agenda. We share Hamelink's concerns. Educating children and young people in a media-saturated society, must include instruction on how to present their opinions in both print and electronic media. The general public should no longer be just passive consumers of mass communication messages. There must be a place for real dialogical communication if democratic societies are to survive.

This is an important aspect of the debate on values in the media today. We hope that the UNESCO conference referred to will be instrumental in rethinking what the old UNESCO statement "the right to communicate" really means in our modern information society.

3.4.2 The role of the media in promoting or hindering the growth of health and social adjustment in society

In the introduction to the book Moral Engagement in Public Life the editors give a brief overview of the historical development of the moral reflections on public communication. They observe:

Interpersonal communication became the dialogical process of defining and redefining relationships through language, a way of constituting ourselves and others who are in relation to us. This emphasis on human relationships also informs theories of organizational communication patterns best suited to further organizational goals. Communication in this context encompasses oral, written and electronic languages to accomplish organizational tasks; sustain human relations, particularly in diverse groups and teams; and to negotiate organizations through conflict and change. Communication technologies enrich and complicate all forms of human communication.... Constructing ethical dialogical selves encompasses several related concerns. These include the search for ethical communication patterns that sustain relationships and build communities.⁸⁶

The editors of this book point out that the new communication technologies both "enrich and complicate all forms of human communication". But the basic purpose of human communication, they maintain, remains unchanged in the midst of all kinds of innovations in communication technologies. If this really is the case, then there are certain basic and universal principles for human communication that can never be ignored. Which are then the implications of holding such a view?

Our physical life is dependent upon the heart's ability to pump blood through the body in a sufficient way. In a similar way sufficient and pertinent communication is needed to secure the mental health of the individual, and to enable individuals to adjust and function in society. Yes, adequate communication is needed to create and sustain human communities at all levels.

"Brainwashing" is partly a process of holding back certain aspects of the information about an issue, with the intention of creating confusion and insecurity. The information available for such persons' intrapersonal communication is then a mixture of lies, half-truths and truths. The ultimate result is a growing insecurity, confusion and, often, a longing for a new security through starting to trust the informant.

This illustrates that a person does not just need some information, but enough and true information for his or her intrapersonal communication to become a mentally balanced and

⁸⁶ Sharon L. Bracci and Clifford G. Christians (eds.): Moral Engagement in Public Life. Theories for Contemporary Ethics. New York, Berlin, Oxford: Peter Lang Publishing, 2002, pp. 1-2.

well-integrated person. An insecure person, due to wrong and insufficient information, will obviously be handicapped in his or her interpersonal communication. This again will make it difficult for such persons to become well-adjusted and well-functioning members of society.

We are not primarily preoccupied with violence, vulgarities and bad taste in media products as isolated incidents. We are, however, very much concerned with trends in media practice which show contempt for human dignity, and which inform about issues in a slanted, incorrect and insufficient way. This is not just deplorable, it is an outright misuse of mass communication. This view is held by the American media professor W. James Potter in a book published recently.⁸⁷ He argues that we underestimate the effects of a media industry which is so much dominated by violence of various forms and contexts. This is really not primarily a moral issue, but more a health issue. Potter writes in the preface:

*I conclude this book with a chapter that offers alternatives.... These alternatives are couched in a public health perspective. The problem with media violence ultimately lies in finding a way to reduce the risks of harmful effects to all individuals as well as society while at the same time not restricting artistic expression, legitimate commerce, or people's access to the widest range of messages possible. This is indeed a complex problem.*⁸⁸

Potter points out that the debate on the media up to now largely has been a war between different groups which are fighting for their own interests. The producers, the public, the policy makers and the researchers all are concerned with their own "territories". They ought to get together and discuss a future policy for mass communication that may be more beneficial for individuals and for society as a whole.⁸⁹ The media has a role to play in the public education for all age groups. This relates to health as well as to social functioning.

Potter is also the author of the book Media Literacy, where he points out the moral implications of media messages:

*All media messages have moral implications. These are easy to spot in some documentaries, news stories, or fictional stories that portray difficult choices people must make. But when we look at cartoons, game shows, or sports, it can be harder to understand that these kinds of shows also have moral implications. We need to be sensitive to the character revealed in the people portrayed. We need to look at the implications of the decisions those characters make and judge whether the story is fair in showing them. And we need to dig below the surface action and infer the themes in the stories as well as the values of the industry that produces them.*⁹⁰

According to this quotation all messages have moral implications in one way or another, which makes the study of values in the media very pertinent.

3.4.3 Mass communication – an “enriching” and a “complicating” element in human communication

We had experienced moments when an excellent movie had given us emotional and intellectual uplifts of an unimaginable quality. A historical event came alive and very close to us, a composer and his music touched us in a special way through a well produced TV-program. Documentaries and debate programs in radio and on TV give new insights. Videos

⁸⁷W. James Potter: The 11 Myths of Media Violence, Thousand Oaks, London, New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2003.

⁸⁸ Ibid. p. xvii.

⁸⁹ Ibid. p. x.

⁹⁰ W. James Potter: Media Literacy. 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, London, New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2001, p. 30.

give us possibilities to buy cultural quality products unheard of in earlier generations. We have a number of media professionals who are excellent with regard to production ability and ethical standards. This really “enriches” the quality of human communication. But we also have products which do not have an acceptable quality, which “complicate” human communication.

This is a real problem for both parents and teachers, and for many media professionals who dislike the fact that the media should become instruments of inferior and exclusively commercial ends.

It is not right to blame the media industry for all ills in today’s society. But misuse of the media through superficially produced programs of various types, is in a sense an attack on the mental well-being of individuals and on the social functioning of humans in society. These kinds of actions are contributing factors in creating confusion and instability in society. We have now presented some of our principal presuppositions when reflecting on the value issue in the media.

3.5 Key methods in media literacy analysis

It is expected that all who are educated, to a certain degree, have the ability to study and analyze printed texts. The present situation however makes us meet new types of “texts”, the visualized and and/or sound recorded “texts”, or various combinations of newer visual and sound texts.

There is a long and solid tradition about how to analyze printed texts. Certain rules must be observed to prevent the reader from becoming a superficial observer more than an analytical critic.

What analytical tools are available for analyzing visual and sound recorded products?

Discussing this issue during a study tour in the USA, we were recommended to take a look at a book by Art Silverblatt.⁹¹ In his book Silverblatt discusses how to analyze visual and sound recorded messages. This book is part of a new body of books on analytical tools for analyzing visual and sound recorded messages. As we in former days stressed the need for becoming print media literate, we now are in a situation where it is necessary to become able to “read” visual and sound recorded “texts”. Silverblatt says in the preface of his book:

To become media literate can best be described as a process of discovery ... One of the principal goals of Media Literacy is to enable you to realize a healthy independence from the pervasive influence of the media and make up your own mind about issues... Two questions invariably are raised by students in discussions with regard to media literacy: Did the media communicator purposely add all of the complex layers of meanings contained in the media production, or are these interpretations simply imposed upon the content by overzealous critics? ... Of course, it is irresponsible to ascribe meaning to a text without supporting evidence from the text. But it is certainly legitimate (and appropriate) to present an interpretation based upon systematic, concrete analysis of media content.⁹²

Here we briefly shall sum up some of the key principles of media analysis based on Silverblatt’s book, whose theories we find reasonable and useful. In this context we concentrate our attention on visual media.

⁹¹ Art Silverblatt: Media Literacy. Keys to Interpreting Media Messages. Westport, Connecticut and London: Praeger, 1995.

⁹² Ibid. pp. ix-x.

Silverblatt suggests that we should call our main attention to the following:

- *Function:* What is the purpose behind the production?
- *Communicator:* Who is responsible for the production?
- *Audience:* One specific or several target audiences? What values, perspectives are shared by the audience?
- *Context:* What is the historical and cultural setting of the production?
- *Structure:* What are the ownership patterns of the media organization presenting the product?
- *Framework:* What does the title signify? Explicit and implicit content?
- *Production:* Choice of actors in the plot, editing, lighting, movements etc.
- *Conclusion:* What are the manifest media messages in the product? What latent messages could be identified?

This is a summary of just a few samples of the theoretical tools proposed by Silverblatt to be applied when trying to “read” visual texts. These tools will help media users to give the products a more fair and systematically analytical treatment. Making use of these tools, media audiences might gradually become more critical and mature in their use of visual media. Media literacy analysis will be a major element in communication education at all levels. It is interesting to observe that David Buckingham in a new book on Media Education has a similar approach as Silverblatt.⁹³

We maintain it is very important to demand quality products from the media industry. Likewise the media industry has the right to demand serious evaluation of their products on the part of media users. Another book on media literacy has also been much consulted.⁹⁴ However, we have chosen primarily to use Silverblatt’s book in our study

3.5.1 The researchers’ analysis of the episodes given top priority by the pupils

The pupils’ analysis of the TV episodes which were given top priority by the pupils, *Hotel Caesar* by the 6th graders, and *Friends* by the 10th graders, are presented elsewhere (see chapter 4). Here is the researchers’ analysis of the episodes.

Hotel Caesar is a Norwegian-produced soap opera which has as its main target audience young people between 12-15 years of age. Our data, and other data, reveal that a large part of the actual target audience consists of children under 11 years of age.

The dramaturgical profile of *Hotel Caesar* is dominated by interpersonal conflicts of all kinds and levels. The episode shown to all the 6th graders participating in our research project is filled with conflicts. Smiles appear to be ironical and condescending except for one incident. A young father returns from hospital with his baby son. He is warmly received by a couple of members of the staff. The episode starts with two female staff members giving a non-white foreigner, the boyfriend of another staff member, a drink mixed with pills which makes him unconscious. The young non-white foreigner is subsequently undressed and put naked in a wheelchair. The wheelchair is set moving down the reception floor, hits a lady and the naked man falls on top of her to a laughing reaction on the part of the two female staff members.

⁹³ David Buckingham: *Media Education: Literacy, Learning and Contemporary Culture*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2003. See also Ola Erstad: *Mediebruk og medieundervisning*, op.cit.

⁹⁴ Potter, *Media Literacy*, op.cit.

The grand old lady in the plot is furious because she is not selected as a guardian. She declares the person preferred as inferior in character and useless. Other members of her family are afraid that the choice of guardian may get serious economic consequences. A young member of the family has been kidnapped. The police seem unable to do much. Secret negotiations are under way with one of the kidnappers. Two lovers on the staff have a confrontation which leads to hard words and a break of relations.

What is the purpose of this production? It is produced by a commercial television company and must be financed and give profit through advertizing. These purposes seemed to have been met since the series has been shown daily for a long time. But what is the purpose of this particular format filled with all kinds of conflicts and mistrust in staff and ownership relations at this very special hotel? If the prime audience is young people between 12 and 15 they meet an age group in transition from childhood to adulthood. The presentation we find in this episode presents an adult world full of intrigues and questionable behavior. The more or less normal tensions between adults and early stage teenagers may be increased through this high-gearred conflict profile. Our data show that a large part of the actual viewers are under eleven years of age.⁹⁵ This is an age when many children have very little ability to reflect cognitively on issues. Our findings show that some of the 6th graders watched *Hotel Caesar* to "learn about adult life", and that many children in general often look at adult programs. Adult behavior in programs is then considered to be a source of information about what it involves to be an adult.

Letting a non-white be exposed to misuse and ridicule is a very negative signal to young people, watching this particular episode. Likewise, the mixture of tablets and alcohol is irresponsible and superficially treated.

The manifest messages in this episode are easy to describe. But are the children able to detect the latent messages? The mixture of alcohol and pills is dangerous and in certain circumstances it may cause death. The fact that there is no reaction on the part of the administration of this hotel is more than strange. In real life settings, incidents like this would have led to severe reactions, and the staff members involved might have possibly lost their jobs.

Are the children really able to identify the implicit values of *Hotel Caesar*?

We end this analysis of values in an episode of *Hotel Caesar* with a comparison of the key values we have decided to give special attention in our research. These values – relationship, attitude, tolerance and problem-solving – are in reality "umbrella" value terms which include several other basic values that we find in L97. These values are not chosen at random, but because of their centrality in the L97 value universe.

The term "relationship", in our context, indicates contact between humans that can be of a high or inferior quality. The Jewish philosopher Martin Buber contends that normative life is dialogic. In his view persons are knowable only in I-Thou (Ich-Du) relationships.⁹⁶ This implies that genuine human communication requires an interaction of mutual interest and respect. The *relationships* portrayed in this episode of *Hotel Caesar* are characterized by mutual distrust and an "I do not care" attitude. The quality of relationships depends on the attitudes of the persons involved. The *attitudes* displayed in this TV episode appear to be cold and tactical. *Problem solving* through an honest dialogue seems to be absent. The *absence of tolerance* of a person of a different race is, implicitly and explicitly, revealed in action and

⁹⁵ Several pupils have said that their younger siblings watch *Hotel Caesar*, often together with their older brothers and sisters.

⁹⁶ Clifford G. Christians, John P. Ferré and P. Mark Fackler: *Good News. Social Ethics & the Press.*, New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993, p. 63.

conversation.⁹⁷ Here we observe a collision between the values in *Hotel Caesar* and those we find in L97.

Friends is an internationally popular series well produced. The actors are very able professionals. They are a mixture of older teenagers and young adults in appearance. Their backgrounds indicate more the young adult situation than that of teenagers. Nevertheless, the plots expose young persons attempting to find partners and jobs, which are interesting issues for both teenagers and young adults. Insecurity, clumsiness, self-irony and good humor give the series an enjoyable and relaxing atmosphere.

Looking critically for the manifest and latent messages of this particular episode, there are several aspects that need to be considered.

The nervousness of Ross meeting his eventual future father-in-law, the teasing comments of his friends create a natural and inviting opening sequence. The dialogue between Ross and his prospective father-in-law is portrayed in a humorous way which is quite entertaining. The same is the case with the problems facing another member of the group, trying to settle down in a new job.

Turning our attention to the message aspects, the issues are less simple. The overt messages are quite entertaining descriptions of two young men, the first being critically assessed by the father of his much younger girl friend, the latter having problems with settling down in a new job. Two quite normal situations in the life of young people. What then are the covert messages of this episode? There is little discussion about values, but value issues are surfacing all the time throughout this episode. Ross has been married before more than once. He also has a six-year-old son from one of his marriages. His former marriages appear more as a back stage decoration than as an issue for serious ethical consideration. The flirting intimacy between the prospective father-in-law and one of the ex-wives of Ross, makes Ross furious. But Ross calms down when this seems to have been done to help him. The covert message of this episode is that what really matters is to adjust to new situations, and live on without bothering to discuss seriously ethics and morals in inter human relations. The ethical profile of this episode indicates an immoral or amoral attitude despite an apparent friendly and humorous appearance. Is the covert message perhaps a purposely portrayed caricature of modern life regarding man-woman relations as well as the situation on the labor market? That is a possible way to interpret the covert message. But is it a sound policy to create "pure entertainment" of something that has many serious consequences for so many, divorce, misuse of alcohol, problems at work? The episode was entertaining, but mass production of making fun plots based on strongly felt human problems is problematic. There are happy marriages, there are good working situations. There are problems that are being solved. We consider *Friends* as a positive TV production. The value aspects, however, are superficially treated.

Principally we also here find a collision between L97 and the program analyzed. But in this case the collision is more gentle and friendly. The difference of values is obvious, but more subtly presented.

Hotel Caesar and *Friends* are different in plot presentation, but both expose a value-free attitude vis-a-vis intentional value norms, in our context vis-a-vis L97. If the problems touched upon in these programs are in fact considered as a type of education about adult life, then children get a wrong picture of the responsibility aspect involved in adult life. In the *Friends* episode there is of course an attempt at problem-solving through dialogue. However, the dialogue we meet is more an entertainment detail than a serious attempt to solve the

⁹⁷ This has also been discovered by the children, see chapter 4.3.

problems arisen. Anyway, we shall have to take into account that these episodes represent an entertainment genre. Nevertheless, there need not be a contradiction between entertaining and paying more attention to generally accepted ethical norms.

3.6 Summary

In this section we have attempted to draw two rough value profiles which point out what the characteristic value profile of the Norwegian public school is, and the value profile of media products.

As researchers we base our reflections on the value descriptions in L97 as a printed document. The children base their views and reactions to the values on L97 on what they are taught in classroom settings, and in various textbook presentations. Our research does not imply “field trips” into teaching situations in classrooms. On the media side, we as researchers, have been able to make a “field-trip” observation of the actual presentations of value-related incidents in two TV episodes. We observe the operationalized aspect of the intentional teaching through the views and reactions of the children, while we observe the operationalized application of whatever ethical guidelines are behind the two media productions being analyzed.

We have found that the Norwegian society is changing from being rather homogenous to becoming more and more a multicultural society. We have observed that Norwegian politicians, with a principal mandate from the parents, want to adjust to this new situation. This they do by giving a series of definitions of relevant value competencies which allow for different interpretations of the underlying premises for each definition, the premises considered being either religious or secular.

There are in the total value spectrum of the Norwegian public school some common value aspects which we find to be in harmony with the international declarations and conventions on human rights issues related to education. These international declarations and conventions, the latter judicially binding if ratified, stress very strongly the rights of parents to have a final say with regard to the worldview and the ethical and moral basis for the education of their children. We maintain that this will be an important aspect in today’s and tomorrow’s educational planning.

We also have discussed the value terms listed as a prime focus in our study. These terms may be interpreted in various ways, and we have clarified what we mean when using these terms.

Turning to the value universe of the media, we have pointed out the complexity of looking for a value profile in an industry that bases its operations on a common reference to “freedom of expression”. However, this term is interpreted in various ways by the media industry. In democratic societies, however, we contend that the media industry is principally value-free, as opposed to the public school which has an intentional value base which is a teaching directive in all Norwegian public schools. We have also pointed out that the recent UN World Summit on the Information Society (December 2003), more directly ought to have taken up the old UNESCO statement of the right of everyone to be a part of the communication process in the information society.⁹⁸ We maintain that to be simply a consumer of media products really means experiencing some social exclusion with regard to the communication process in society. A journalist from Argentina argues that we must “ build communities instead of markets”.⁹⁹

⁹⁸ Philip Lee (ed.): Communication for All. The Church and The New World Information and Communication Order. London: WACC, 1985, p. xxi.

⁹⁹ Dafne Sebanes Plou: Global Communication. Is There a Place for Human Dignity? Geneva: WCC Publications, 1996, p. xi.

Many media researchers maintain that the value issue in the media is something different than talking about right-wrong, bad or good taste etc. We are of the opinion that this is basically a health and a social adjustment issue, and an important aspect of the present day media ethical debate.

We have also given a brief orientation about media literacy, and made an attempt to compare the values found in these two TV episodes with the values from L97.

Hotel Caesar and *Friends* are very different in their plot presentation. The former has a more rough style, the latter has a soft and amusing appearance. But both bring in heavy value issues without giving them a proper reflection. While L97 intends to help children to reflect on ethical issues in a quiet dialogical interaction, these episodes in reality use moral issues as “salt and pepper” spice in commercial productions. We found it to be a clear difference between the value profiles in these TV programs and the values we find in L97.

In the next chapter we will present the pupils’ own views on how they experience being in the interaction between the values taught and discussed in the classroom and the values they encountered in the “parallel school” of the media.

Chapter 4:

Results from the questionnaire and interview study

4.1 Introduction

The results presented in this chapter are concerned with what was called problem area B, which in chapter 1.4 was formulated in these words:

How do children and young people react to what they see and hear in the “parallel school”? How do they consider the relationship between the values and attitudes existing in the established upbringing/education passed on to them in home and school, and the values and attitudes they encounter in the products of the “parallel school”? To what degree do children and young people experience being in a “crossfire” between the intentional school/upbringing and the “parallel school” of the media- and computer industry?

In order to gain an understanding of these issues, data were collected by means of questionnaires and interviews with children from the two age groups, from their teachers, and from their parents. The data collection procedure is described in chapter 2.2.

This chapter aims to present results from the questionnaires and interviews, with a clear focus on the questions cited above. After having presented in chapter 4.2 results concerning how children and young people use the visual media, chapter 4.3 and chapter 4.4 aim to penetrate into the children’s reactions to and considerations about the value issues in focus in this study. The questionnaire data are used mainly to obtain a picture of general trends within the two age groups of children, but with a watchful eye on the differences within the age groups, too. The interview data are used as a supplement to the quantitative data, and to help in interpreting the results.

Our main intention is to study the issues from the children’s perspective. Nevertheless, it is of interest to compare the children’s answers with the answers given by adult people in their environment. This is done throughout the chapter where we have relevant data. In chapter 4.5, School and media, focus is on the media used in school. Pupils’ and teachers’ viewpoints are compared. Chapter 4.6 takes up some issues concerning the parents’ view of the media.

Summing up and discussing the results in chapter 4.7, we try to give an answer to the question whether the children and young people experience being in a “crossfire” between the intentional school/upbringing and the “parallel school” of the media, as formulated in problem area B. The last part of this chapter leads over to chapter 5, addressing the challenges represented by the “parallel school” for pedagogical research and practice.

4.2 Children’s and young people’s use of the media

Under this heading results will be presented which describe how 12 year-old children and 16 year-old children use media. We look at what types of media they have access to at home, and how much time the children say they spend on media. Do they use the media alone or together with their family or friends? Results are presented about what kinds of programs are preferred by children at age 12 and age 16. In addition, we consider to what degree children discuss their use of the media with their parents and their friends, and whether their use of the media is a source of conflict at home.

The results are mainly based on the information given by the children in their questionnaires. Where it seems to be of interest, children's answers are compared to information given by their parents in their questionnaires.

4.2.1 Access to visual media equipment at home

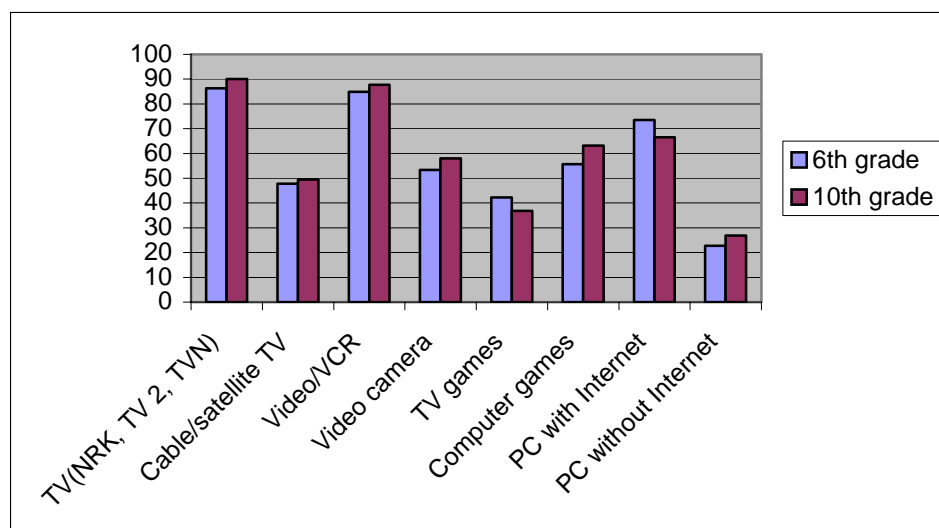
The great majority of children and young people have access to TV at home. The question in the questionnaire (Q9) distinguishes between TV (NRK, TV 2, TVNorge) and cable TV, and therefore some of those having access to cable TV have not marked for the alternative TV. Therefore, when table 2 and figure 1 show that 90 % have access to TV at home, this is clearly an underestimate. 85-90 % of the pupils say they have access to video at home, and more than a half of them even to a video camera. About 70% have a PC with Internet at home, while about 60 % say they have access to computer games and about 40 % to TV-games.

Table 2. What media equipment and media products do you have access to at home? Percentages. 6th grade: N=291. 10th grade: N=212.

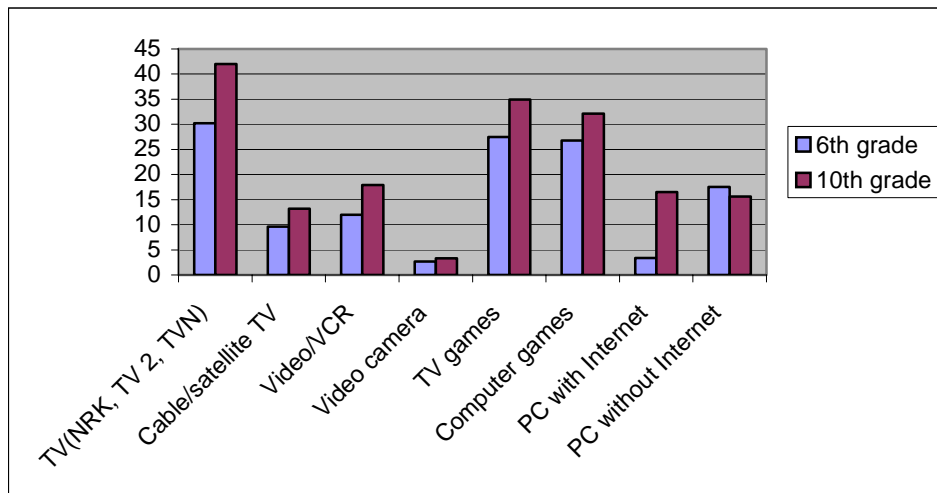
	For everyone's use		Have in my room					
	6th	10th	6th			10th		
			Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
TV (NRK, TV 2 TVN)	86,3	90,1	35,0	24,6	30,2	46,3	37,5	42,0
Cable/satellite TV	47,8	49,5	11,5	7,5	9,6	17,6	8,7	13,2
Video/VCR	84,9	87,7	14,6	9,0	12,0	26,9	8,7	17,9
Video camera	53,3	58,0	1,9	3,7	2,7	2,8	3,8	3,3
TV games	42,3	36,8	35,7	17,9	27,5	50,9	18,3	34,9
Computer games	55,7	63,2	33,8	18,7	26,8	50,0	13,5	32,1
PC with the Internet	73,5	66,5	6,4	0,0	3,4	25,0	7,7	16,5
PC without the Internet	22,7	26,9	25,5	8,2	17,5	21,3	9,6	15,6

Figure 1. Access to media equipment at home.

a) For everyone's use:



b) Have in my room:



There seem to be no considerable differences between 6th graders and 10th graders in access to media equipment for everyone's use at home. But, reasonably enough, the older children have more media equipment in their own room. More than 40 % of the 10th graders and about 30 % of the 6th graders say they have TV in their own room. The corresponding numbers regarding cable TV, are 13 % and 10 %, respectively, and for video 18 % and 12 %. 16 % of the 10th graders have a PC with Internet in their own room, against 3-4 % of the 6th graders. It is also more usual for 10th graders than for 6th graders to have TV games and computer games in their own room. A little more than one third of the 10th graders mark for having TV games and almost the same number mark for computer games, against a little more than a quarter of the 6th graders.

However, far more boys than girls have TV-games, computer games and a PC with or without Internet in their own room. Especially among the 10th graders, the same is the case for video. 27 % of the boys in 10th grade state that they have video in their room, against 9 % of the girls. 51 % of the boys in 10th grade have TV games in their room, against 18 % of the girls. Corresponding figures among the 6th graders are 36 % and 18 %, respectively.¹⁰⁰

Even though many pupils have several kinds of media equipment in their own room, nearly one half of the 6th graders and a little more than one third of the 10th graders state they do not have access to any visual media equipment in their own room. The difference between girls and boys is visible, here too. 40 % of the boys and 59 % of the girls in 6th grade do not have any equipment of this kind in their own room. Among 10th graders the figures are 24 % and 50 %.

4.2.2 How much time do they spend on visual media?

Table 3a shows how pupils respond to question 11 a, being asked how much time they spend on the various media and media products on a normal weekday (Monday-Friday). The children's responses may be compared to the responses of parents, shown in table 3b. The parents as well as the children have a high percentage of unanswered questions regarding

¹⁰⁰ Somewhat similar tendencies are recorded in Sonia Livingstone and Moira Bovill. Young People – New Media, Report of the Research Project “Children, Young People and the Changing Media Environment”. London: London School of Economics and Political Science, 1999, chapter 12: Research & Policy Conclusions.

many of the types of media. In most cases this is due to no access to that type of media at home. In those cases unmarked cells may be perceived as a zero.

Table 3a. How much time do you spend daily on the various media and media products on a normal weekday (Monday-Friday)? Percentages. 6th grade: N=291. 10th grade: N=212.

		Not answered	< ½ h	½-1 h	2-3 h	4-5 h	Over 5 h	Don't know
TV (NRK, TV 2, TVN)	6 th	11,3	11,0	32,0	24,4	5,2	3,1	13,1
	10 th	6,6	6,6	31,1	35,8	11,8	3,8	4,2
Cable/satellite TV	6 th	46,0	7,2	14,8	15,8	3,8	2,1	10,3
	10 th	36,3	10,4	14,2	20,3	7,1	2,8	9,0
Video/VCR	6 th	21,3	20,6	20,3	15,8	1,7	0,0	21,0
	10 th	12,7	34,4	13,7	12,7	0,5	1,0	25,0
TV-games	6 th	33,0	21,6	19,6	11,0	3,1	0,7	11,0
	10 th	31,6	31,1	12,3	8,0	1,4	0,9	14,6
Computer games	6 th	16,8	21,0	30,2	17,2	3,8	1,4	9,6
	10 th	19,3	28,8	21,2	12,7	4,2	2,8	10,8
PC with the Internet	6 th	27,5	28,9	22,3	7,6	1,4	0,6	11,7
	10 th	19,3	22,2	28,3	17,5	3,3	0,5	9,0
PC without the Internet	6 th	52,2	15,1	16,2	5,2	1,7	0,3	9,3
	10 th	46,7	20,3	16,0	2,4	1,9	2,3	10,4

Table 3b. The parents' answers to: "How often does your 6th grader or 10th grader make use of the various media products on a normal weekday (Monday-Friday)? Base your evaluation on your general impression." Percentages. 6th grade: N=186. 10th grade: N=148. (The total number exceeds the number of questionnaires for persons (301), because some parents have answered for both a 6th grader and a 10th grader)

	Parents to ...	Not answered	< ½ h	½-1 h	2-3 h	4-5 h	Over 5 h	Don't know
TV (NRK, TV 2, TVN)	6 th gr.	8,1	5,9	51,1	26,9	4,8	1,6	1,6
	10 th gr.	5,4	12,2	45,3	29,7	4,7	2,7	0,0
Cable/satellite TV	6 th gr.	43,0	9,1	22,6	10,2	3,2	2,7	9,1
	10 th gr.	34,5	10,8	27,0	12,8	2,0	2,8	10,1
Video/VCR	6 th gr.	29,0	38,7	19,4	4,3	0,5	1,6	6,5
	10 th gr.	27,7	34,5	12,8	5,4	0,7	0,7	18,2
TV-games	6 th gr.	33,9	27,4	22,0	4,3	1,1	1,6	9,7
	10 th gr.	39,9	26,4	11,5	2,0	0,7	0,0	19,6
Computer games	6 th gr.	13,4	31,7	37,6	10,8	1,1	0,5	4,8
	10 th gr.	23,0	28,4	27,0	12,2	0,7	0,7	8,1
PC with the Internet	6 th gr.	27,4	42,5	20,4	4,8	0,5	0,0	4,3
	10 th gr.	16,9	37,2	28,4	7,4	0,7	2,1	7,4
PC without the Internet	6 th gr.	52,7	19,4	14,0	2,7	0,0	0,5	10,7
	10 th gr.	49,3	16,2	9,5	6,8	2,0	0,0	16,2

However, there is pretty much uncertainty associated with the results in tables 3a and 3b. The design of the question may have been too difficult for some respondents, particularly some of the 6th graders. The answers given by some pupils for some kinds of media not included in the table, for example mobile phone and cinema, are clearly too high. We cannot rule out the

possibility that such errors may have influenced the results in table 3a, too, even if it is not obvious for those kinds of media.

There are some reasons to have more confidence in the answers given by the parents. However, their answers are influenced by another source of uncertainty, whether they have satisfactory knowledge about their children's use of media. We see from table 3b that the estimates of time given by the parents are consistently lower than the estimates given by the children.¹⁰¹

For several reasons, it would be wrong to add the time spent on the various kinds of media to get an estimate of total time spent on the media. Looking at the figures from the 2001 series of Statistics Norway Analyses, we find that children aged 9-15 on an average spend a total time close to 3 hours and 45 minutes on visual media (TV, video, PC at home and Internet).¹⁰² Even though the results are not directly comparable because of different questions, our results seem to indicate that our children are as keen on visual media as children in the rest of Norway. And most of the time they spend on the media, is spent on TV.

4.2.3 Do they use the media alone or along with family or friends?

Children use visual media at home, partly alone, partly with their family, and partly with friends. It appears from table 4 that 10th graders more typically than 6th graders use visual media with their friends (Q10). The difference is most noticeable in the case of video. More than 80 % of the 10th graders say they use video with their friends, as against about 50 % of the 6th graders. However, a large majority in both age groups report watching TV and video along with their family, while they tend to use TV games and computers alone or along with friends. Particularly among 10th graders, the same is the case of a PC. Close to 45 % of the 6th graders say they use a PC with Internet along with the family.

¹⁰¹ The children whose parents have answered the questionnaire have not given lower estimates than the other children, so there is no reason to explain the difference between children and parents as an indication of having replies from a selected group of parents.

¹⁰² Odd Frank Vaage. Norsk Mediebarometer 2001. Oslo: Statistisk sentralbyrå, 2002.

Table 4. The children's answers to: How do you use the equipment at home? Percentages. 6th grade: N=291. 10th grade: N=212.

		Alone	With the family	With friends
NRK, TV 2, TVN	6 th	66,0	78,0	58,8
	10 th	79,7	83,5	80,7
Cable/satellite TV	6 th	33,0	43,3	30,6
	10 th	39,2	45,8	43,9
Video/VCR	6 th	51,9	65,6	50,9
	10 th	67,5	59,9	81,6
TV-games	6 th	50,9	25,4	47,8
	10 th	46,2	22,6	53,3
Computer games	6 th	66,7	29,6	56,7
	10 th	76,4	15,6	60,4
PC with the Internet	6 th	49,1	44,7	39,9
	10 th	72,6	19,3	53,8
PC without the Internet	6 th	32,3	16,7	24,7
	10 th	36,3	8,0	19,3

An interesting difference is noticed when we compare the children's answers to the question about how they use the media equipment, with the parents' answers to a corresponding question (Q7, see table 5). Maybe the parents underestimate how much their children watch TV and video and use a PC with Internet at home along with their friends, and overestimate to what degree they do it along with the family. It may equally well be the children who misjudge in the opposite direction, or who perhaps feel more comfortable reporting that they watch TV etc. with their friends than with their family. There is no noticeable difference between the answers of those pupils with available answers from the parents and the answers of the rest of the pupils. Therefore, there seems to be no reason to explain the difference between parents and children as due to having replies from a selected group of parents.

Table 5. The parents' answers to: How does your child use this equipment at home? Percentages. N=301.

	Alone	With the family	With friends
NRK, TV 2, TVN	76,4	91,4	58,6
Cable/satellite TV	36,2	51,8	29,6
Video/VCR	63,8	78,4	60,8
TV-games	57,1	28,9	51,8
Computer games	81,4	42,5	69,1
PC with the Internet	60,8	60,8	45,8
PC without the Internet	39,5	16,3	22,9

4.2.4 Renting video films, and use of the media outside the home

As expected, 10th graders rent video films more often than 6th graders do (table 6). Close to 40 % of the 10th graders rent a video film at least once a week, and more than 70 % do so at least once a month. The corresponding figures for the 6th graders are 22 % and about 53 %. Among the 6th graders boys rent a video film more often than girls. In 10th grade there is a majority of boys among those who rent a video most often, as well as among those who do it seldom or never, while the girls show less variation in their answers.

Table 6. How often do you rent a video film? Percentages.

	6 th grade			10 th grade		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
Several times a week	2,5	0,7	1,7	13,9	5,8	9,9
Once a week	24,8	15,7	20,6	30,6	26,9	28,8
Once a month	29,9	32,1	30,9	25,0	42,3	33,5
1-3 times a year	30,6	38,1	34,0	18,5	17,3	17,9
Never	7,6	11,9	9,6	9,3	3,8	6,6
Not answered	4,5	1,5	3,1	2,8	3,8	3,3
N	157	134	291	108	104	212

The 10th graders were also asked if they buy video films by mail order. 12 % of the boys and 5,8 % of the girls answered yes.

Both 6th graders and 10th graders were asked if they usually watch video films alone or with friends, parents or other adults (Q6:19;10:25). Table 7 shows that they most often watch video films with friends. Among the 6th graders, the majority says that they usually watch video films with friends, while 12-13 % usually do it with their parents. Scarcely any 10th grader reports usually watching video films along with adults.

Table 7: When you watch a video film, are you usually alone, with friends, with parents or with other adults? Percentages.

	6 th grade			10 th grade		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
Alone	19,7	14,9	17,5	13,0	3,8	8,5
With friends	58,6	56,7	57,7	64,8	82,7	73,6
With parents	12,1	13,4	12,7	1,9	0,0	0,9
With other adults	1,3	0,0	0,7	0,0	0,0	0,0
Not answered	8,3	14,9	11,3	20,4	13,5	17,0
N	157	134	291	108	104	212

How often the children go to the cinema (Q6:16;10:19), is shown in table 8. The 10th graders go to the cinema a little more often than 6th graders do. About one third of the 10th graders say they go to the cinema 2-3 times a month or more. In both age groups there is a significant correlation between how often they go to the cinema and how often they rent a video film.¹⁰³ That means, there is a trend, statistically significant although not very strong, that those who often go to the cinema are the same as those often renting a video film.

¹⁰³ 6th grade: Kendall's tau_b=0,26, p=.002; 10th grade: Kendall's tau_b=0,20, p=.002.

Table 8. How often do you go to the cinema? Percentages. 6th grade: N=291. 10th grade: N=212.

	6 th	10 th
Never	2,4	2,4
1-3 times in 6 months	41,2	29,7
Once a month	21,3	26,4
2-3 times a month	10,3	27,4
4-5 times a month	0,7	4,7
More than 5 times a month	1,7	1,9
Don't know	20,6	6,1

The 10th graders were also asked if there is an Internet cafe where they live (Q28). 43,4 % say yes, 40,6 % no, and the rest don't know. Among those having an Internet cafe where they live, 13,2 % say they use it once a week or more (Q29). They do so mainly to surf the Internet, be together with friends, and take part in a chat-group (Q30).

Table 9 shows how often the children use various resources at the public library (Q6:22;10:27). Some children in both age groups use Internet at the library now and then, but few children do so more often than once a week. The 6th graders use the library a little more often than the 10th graders. This holds for both books and video. At the library both groups use books more often than they use other resources.

Table 9. What resources do you use at the public library? Percentages. 6th grade: N=291. 10th grade: N=212.

		Never	Less than once a week	Once a week	Several times a week	Not answered
Internet	6 th	52,9	23,0	4,8	3,1	16,2
	10 th	56,1	30,2	4,7	1,9	7,1
Books	6 th	23,7	51,2	13,4	3,8	7,9
	10 th	44,3	42,9	4,7	0,5	12,3
Videos	6 th	45,0	28,5	6,2	2,4	17,9
	10 th	70,8	16,0	0,5	0,5	12,3
PC	6 th	57,4	16,5	2,1	2,7	21,3
	10 th	68,4	16,0	1,4	1,9	12,3

More than half of the children in both age groups say they never borrow video films at the library (Q6:20;10:26). However, 7,2 % of the 6th graders say they do so once a week or more, as against just 0,5 % of the 10th graders.

4.2.5 What type of programs do they prefer, and what type of media gives them the greatest enjoyment?

The children were asked what type of video films they rent most often, and what type of programs they prefer to watch on TV.

Table 10 shows the results for video films. There are some open cells in the table, due to differences in the alternatives given to 6th graders and 10th graders. Another difference should be noted, too. The 6th graders were asked to mark what type of video they rent most often, being allowed to mark more than one type (Q18). The 10th graders were asked to rank three types of films, putting 1 for the most common type, 2 for the next most common, and 3 for the

third most common (Q22). The ranking is not shown in table 10, which shows the percentage of 10th graders having the type concerned among the three most common types. There is much variation in the numbers of marks given by the 6th graders, but the mean is just below 2. Therefore, table 10 should not be used to compare directly the results for the two age groups. The table informs us about the relative popularity of the various types of films within each age group.

Table 10. What types of video films do you rent most often? Percentages. 6th grade: N=291. 10th grade: N=212.

	6 th grade			10 th grade		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
Action films	69,4	23,1	48,1*	94,4	74,0	81,4*
Sex films	----	----	----	13,0	2,9	8,0*
Science fiction	----	----	----	47,2	12,5	30,2*
Documentaries	5,1	2,2	3,8	----	----	----
Historical films	----	----	----	7,4	5,8	6,6
Romantic films	6,4	26,1	15,5*	7,4	68,3	37,3*
Nature films	5,1	3,7	4,5	1,9	1,9	1,9
Music videos	3,2	9,0	5,8*	6,5	5,8	6,1
Cartoons	21,7	22,4	22,0	3,7	5,8	4,7
Sports films	7,6	0,7	4,5*	10,2	3,8	7,1
Comedies/comedy series	50,3	59,7	54,6	79,6	84,6	82,1
Other	10,8	15,7	13,1	22,2	41,3	31,6*

Statistically significant differences between boys and girls are marked with an * in the total column within each age group.¹⁰⁴ We see that boys are more eager than girls to rent action films, sex films, science fiction and sports films, while the girls are in the majority among those choosing romantic films. In 6th grade more girls than boys rent music videos, but that difference seems to be gone in 10th grade. In 10th grade, however, more girls than boys mark the other-category. Several of the films mentioned within this category, are horror films.

Among the boys, action films and comedies/comedy series are the winners, in both age groups. In addition, several 10th grade boys give priority to science fiction films. The girls give highest priority to comedies/comedy series. However, particularly in 10th grade, many girls choose action films and romantic films. In the age group, more girls choose action films than romantic films. We remember having seen that rented video films usually are watched with friends, and one reason why so many 10th grade girls choose action films may be that boys and girls in this age group are together in renting video films.

Cartoons have quite a lot of popularity among 6th graders, but not much among 10th graders.

Table 11 shows the answers to a question about which TV programs they usually prefer to watch. According to their instruction the children should rank the three types of program they prefer by putting 1, 2, and 3 (Q6:25:10,35). Table 10 shows the percentage having mentioned each type of program among the three types they like best. The word “documentaries” was used in the questionnaire to the 10th graders, while it was called “nature programs” for the 6th

¹⁰⁴ Kendall's tau_b, p<.05.

graders. As the program “Ut i naturen” was used as an example for both age groups, they have been put in the same row in the table.

Table 11. Which TV programs do you usually prefer to watch? The percentage having mentioned each type of program among the three types they like best. 6th grade: N=291. 10th grade: N=212.

	6 th grade			10 th grade		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
News/information	18,5	23,1	20,6	26,9	24,0	25,5
Cartoons	55,4	44,0	50,2	13,9	14,4	14,2
Sport	43,9	17,2	31,6	49,1	24,0	36,8
Quiz shows	23,6	26,9	25,1	14,8	17,3	16,0
Debate programs	8,9	6,7	7,9	4,6	8,7	6,6
Action	57,3	32,1	45,7	43,5	39,4	41,5
Documentaries/nature programs	22,9	20,1	21,6	13,0	12,5	12,7
Comedies/comedy series	65,0	73,9	69,1	83,3	90,4	86,8
Science fiction	31,2	12,7	22,7	25,0	11,5	18,4
Soaps	45,9	71,6	57,7	38,9	79,8	59,0

Comedies/comedy series is the clear winner in both age groups and both genders. Among the 6th graders 65 % of the boys and 74 % of the girls have this type of program among the three they like best, and the same is the case for as many as 83 % of the boys and 90 % of the girls in 10th grade. Among the girls, soaps is a clear number two, 70-80 % of the girls have marked this type of program. 6th grade boys show a preference for action films (exemplified with “Detektimen”), but in 10th grade the difference between boys and girls in relation to action films has almost disappeared. If we compare table 11 with table 10, it seems that 10th graders, and particularly the boys, prefer renting action films rather than watching those on TV.

Cartoons is popular among half of the 6th graders, while just below 15 % of the 10th graders have marked this category. 40-50 % of the boys have marked sports programs, against about 20 % among the girls. Sports programs seem to have slightly higher popularity in 10th grade than in 6th grade. Science fiction is also a more popular genre among boys than among girls.

About one quarter of the 10th graders have marked news/information among the three types of program which they like best. In both these age groups just a few persons take an interest in debate programs.

The children in both age groups have been asked to write down the name of three TV programs, series or individual programs, that they personally have liked best or like best (Q6:26;10:36).

The 6th graders spread their first choices over close to 100 different programs, and the 10th graders over more than 50 programs. Nevertheless, there are two clear winners, *Hotel Caesar* and *Friends*. *Hotel Caesar* gets 20,3 % of the first votes in 6th grade and *Friends* 6,5 %. These are two programs getting most second votes, too, in this age group. In 10th grade the sequence is reversed, and *Friends* gets as much as 47,2 % of the first votes, while *Hotel Caesar* gets 8 % and *Ally McBeal* 4,2 %. These three programs get most second choices, too, in this age group.

The main reason for liking *Friends*, is “entertainment”. Besides, some say they like the program because they like the actors. Entertainment is the most commonly mentioned reason to like *Hotel Caesar*, too, among the 10th graders. Most 6th graders say they like it because of

it gives them “excitement”. It is worth noticing that about 10 % of those having chosen *Hotel Caesar*, in both age groups, mention “to gain insight into adult life” as a reason.¹⁰⁵

Another question in the questionnaire (Q6:29;10:43) gives more general information about how children and young people value entertainment, excitement, and so on, while watching TV and films. The alternatives presented should be ranked from number 1 to number 3, but some pupils have put more than one alternative as number one, and some of them have put a mark instead of a number. Table 12 shows the percent of pupils having given each alternative first and second priority alone or together with at least one more category, or just marked the category. The 6th graders tend to choose the alternative "excitement" in the first place, while the 10th graders rather choose “being entertained”. Close to one half of the 6th graders have put “excitement” in the first place, alone or together with other alternative(s), and more than one half of the 10th graders have done the same for “being entertained”. Correspondingly, “excitement” gets next most votes among the 10th graders, while “being entertained” does among the 6th graders. We saw the same trend when they answered why they like *Hotel Caesar*.¹⁰⁶

Even if we add the percentages for “gaining more knowledge”, “experiencing other countries and cultures”, and “being informed about current affairs/issues”, just about 10 % have these types of programs on the first place, while about one quarter of the pupils choose such programs as number two or by giving a mark. Some 6th graders have chosen the alternative “other”, but they give examples which mainly should be included in the categories “excitement” or “being entertained”.

Table 12. Say what you like best to experience when you watch a film, video, TV. Percentages. 6th grade: N=291. 10th grade: N=212.

		1. place, alone or divided	2. place, alone or divided	Mark
Being entertained	6 th	35,7	27,1	9,3
	10 th	53,3	26,9	9,0
Gaining more knowledge	6 th	3,8	11,7	3,1
	10 th	3,3	10,4	2,4
Experiencing other countries and cultures	6 th	3,1	5,8	2,1
	10 th	1,4	4,7	0,5
Excitement	6 th	47,4	24,4	8,9
	10 th	33,0	39,2	9,9
Being informed about current affairs/issues	6 th	3,1	4,8	1,0
	10 th	2,4	5,7	1,9
Other	6 th	4,4	3,1	2,1
	10 th	0,9	1,4	0,9

Furthermore, the pupils are asked why they use the various media. The alternatives given were “excitement”, “educational”, “entertainment”, “nothing special” and “other” (Q6:42;10:60). Table 13 shows that excitement and entertainment are the most common reasons for using most of the types of media. However, when it comes to the use of a PC, with or without Internet, a wish to learn seems to be an important reason. Learning is mentioned as one of the reasons to watch TV, too, by 22 % of the 6th graders and close to one third of the

¹⁰⁵ Section 4.3 gives more information about how the 6th graders experience *Hotel Caesar* and how the 10th graders experience *Friends*.

¹⁰⁶ Similar tendencies are shown in *Young People – New Media*, op.cit., chapter 12, pp. 12-13.

10th graders. Once again, we see that it seems easier for the young people to choose the alternative “entertainment” while the 6th graders prefer “excitement”.

Table 13. Say why you use the various media. Percentages. 6th grade: N=291. 10th grade: N=212.

		Excitement	Learning	Entertainment	Nothing special	Other
TV	6 th	69,4	22,0	45,7	8,2	1,7
	10 th	62,3	32,5	84,4	3,3	1,9
Video	6 th	52,6	9,6	39,2	12,7	1,7
	10 th	61,8	12,3	73,1	3,8	1,9
TV games	6 th	32,6	6,5	30,6	23,4	1,7
	10 th	26,4	2,4	51,4	23,6	2,4
Computer games	6 th	38,8	13,4	40,5	16,8	1,7
	10 th	34,4	9,0	57,1	17,0	1,4
PC with the Internet	6 th	11,7	41,2	26,1	14,8	1,7
	10 th	13,7	66,5	59,9	6,1	4,2
PC without the Internet	6 th	10,7	13,1	21,3	22,3	1,4
	10 th	9,4	29,2	26,4	25,0	1,4
Cinema	6 th	49,5	5,5	44,7	13,7	2,4
	10 th	59,9	3,9	79,2	7,5	3,8

Naturally, what kind of program they want to see, may depend on the child’s mood at the moment. The questionnaire does not catch how such variations may influence the choice of types of programs. In the interview a 10th grader reflects on his choice of types of programs in this interesting way:

It depends in what kind of mood I am. If I am somewhat depressed, then I prefer killings and actions. If I am in good mood, then I would prefer that conflicts should be solved in a peaceful way.

As a reply to our question whether a positive program would be uplifting when being depressed, he answered:

Yes, that might be, but actually I think I might have turned off such a program, because when I am in a bad mood, I don’t like looking at scenes showing friendliness and goodwill.

We do not argue that this is the way most children and young people would react, but the quotation shows that their feelings and thoughts in relation to various types of programs, may be a little more complicated than one perhaps thinks at first.

Question 12 asks the pupils which type of media they personally feel gives them most benefit. As table 14 shows, CD or cassette player is among the alternatives ranked, not only visual types of media. The pupils were asked the three types of media which give them most benefit. The table shows the percentage having mentioned each type of media among the three first ranks, or having just marked it.

Table 14. Which type of media do you personally feel gives you the greatest benefit? The percentage having mentioned each type of program among the types given the three highest ranks. 6th grade: N=291. 10th grade: N=212.

	6 th grade	10 th grade
Various types of TV programs	78,7	75,9
PC with the Internet	45,7	65,9
CD-Rom	31,3	14,2
Video	35,4	24,5
Music video	26,1	19,3
Computer- and TV games	61,2	36,3
Cinema	28,8	16,5
CD or cassette player	47,8	42,4
Other	10,3	18,8

Reasonably enough, the TV programs win. In both age groups 75-80 % have TV programs among the three types given highest rank. Two thirds of the 10th graders have mentioned PC with Internet among the three types giving them most benefit, against close to half of the 6th graders. Computer and TV games are mentioned by a little more than 60 % of the 6th graders, and 35 % of the 10th graders. CD or cassette player is mentioned by between 40 and 50 % in both age groups. The other categories are mainly exemplified by mobile phone and newspapers.

There is reason to believe that the word “benefit” has been interpreted differently by different pupils. As few as 35 % of the 6th graders and 25 % of the 10th graders have given video one of the three first ranks. Perhaps this indicates that many pupils have interpreted benefit as some kind of learning benefit. On the other hand, when computer and TV games get so high support, particularly in the 6th grade, it may indicate that they interpret benefit as enjoyment. This ambiguity need not necessarily be a weakness only, it may be interpreted as a sign of different pupils giving different degree of priority to various types of benefit.

These viewpoints from the children may be compared to the parents’ answers when asked what they think are the most useful visual media in the home for their children (Q21). The alternatives given were TV, video, the Internet, and computer and TV games. TV gets more than 60 % of the first votes, and Internet close to 30 %.

The 10th graders were asked whether they think that using the visual media generally increase their knowledge and insight (Q49). Table 15 shows that more boys than girls think visual media increase their knowledge and insight “to a great extent”. However, within both genders, 80-85 % say that visual media increase their insight, at least to some extent.

Table 15. Do you think that using the visual media (TV, video etc.) generally increases your knowledge and insight? Percentages. 10th grade: N=212.

	10 th grade		
	Boys	Girls	Total
To a great extent	50,0	25,0	37,7
To some extent	35,2	56,7	45,8
To a slight extent	5,6	5,8	5,7
Not at all	0,0	1,9	0,9
Don’t know	9,3	10,6	9,9

They are asked to explain in what way the visual media increase their knowledge and insight. The alternatives given are “provides more facts”, “makes the topic more real”, and “provides more information”. 67 % say that visual media provide more information, 62 % that they provide more facts, while 46 % say they make the topic more real.

4.2.6 Discussing use of media with parents and friends

To what extent do children and young people discuss their use of media with their parents and with their friends? How do the children and young people experience such discussions? To what extent do the parents interfere with the children’s use of media at home? Those are the main issues to be dealt with on the next pages.

The question asking if they discuss their use of media with parents and friends includes CD or cassette player, walkman/discman, radio and mobile phone, in addition to the visual media (Q13). To what extent use of the visual media is discussed, can then be compared with the extent of discussing the use of other types of media.

We see from table 16 that, generally, children and young people tend to discuss their use of media more with their friends than with their parents. About one quarter of the 6th graders and one third of the 10th graders say they often discuss their use of CD or cassette player with their friends, and one fifth of the 6th graders and one third of the 10th graders give the same answer concerning video and cinema. 20-25 % say they often discuss TV with their friends. Among the 6th graders, however, TV games and computer games seem to be the visual media which they most often discuss with their friends. In 10th grade about one third say they often discuss the use of Internet with their friends, and as many as half of the 10th graders say they often discuss the use of mobile phone with friends.

Table 16: Do you discuss your use of the media with your parents/guardians and friends? Percentages. 6th grade: N=291. 10th grade: N=212.

		With parents				With friends			
		Never	Sometimes	Often	Not answered	Never	Sometimes	Often	Not answered
TV (NRK/TV2/TVN)	6 th	12,4	62,3	18,6	7,9	15,1	49,5	22,7	10,7
	10 th	23,6	62,7	10,8	2,8	17,0	53,3	24,5	5,2
Cable/satellite TV	6 th	18,2	28,2	14,4	39,2	17,2	25,8	16,5	40,5
	10 th	36,8	33,5	8,5	21,2	24,1	37,7	17,0	21,2
Video/VCR	6 th	24,4	51,5	8,6	15,5	17,9	45,0	19,6	17,5
	10 th	42,5	46,2	4,2	7,1	19,3	37,3	33,0	10,4
TV-games	6 th	40,5	27,1	6,2	26,1	14,1	33,7	23,7	28,5
	10 th	58,0	20,8	2,8	18,4	35,4	34,0	12,7	17,9
Computer games	6 th	32,3	37,1	11,0	19,6	11,7	38,8	28,5	21,0
	10 th	53,8	30,2	6,6	9,4	30,7	34,9	23,1	11,3
PC with the Internet	6 th	21,6	38,8	20,3	19,2	19,2	39,9	18,6	22,3
	10 th	20,8	46,7	21,7	10,8	17,5	37,3	33,5	11,8
PC without the Internet	6 th	32,6	21,0	3,8	42,6	20,6	22,0	8,9	48,5
	10 th	49,1	19,3	3,6	27,8	41,5	23,6	6,1	28,8
CD or cassette player	6 th	37,1	44,0	13,1	5,8	22,3	40,2	24,4	13,1
	10 th	45,3	42,9	7,5	4,2	22,2	37,3	34,4	6,1
Walkman/discman	6 th	50,2	20,6	2,1	27,1	41,2	21,0	5,8	32,0
	10 th	73,1	10,8	1,4	14,6	58,0	21,7	3,3	17,0
Radio	6 th	49,5	24,7	6,9	18,9	54,6	13,4	4,1	27,8
	10 th	58,5	30,7	4,2	6,6	52,4	31,1	7,1	9,4
Mobile phone	6 th	18,8	33,7	13,4	36,1	18,6	27,8	14,8	38,8
	10 th	18,9	53,3	21,7	6,1	9,0	32,5	49,1	9,4
Cinema	6 th	20,6	53,3	10,7	15,5	14,1	45,0	20,6	20,3
	10 th	36,8	51,9	4,7	6,6	13,2	46,2	32,1	8,5

Among the 10th graders, mobile phone and Internet are the two types of media which are most often discussed with the parents, too. A little more than 20 % say they often discuss those types of the media with their parents, and that means that the 10th graders discuss those types of media with their parents more often than the 6th graders do. However, it seems that the 6th graders discuss all other types of media with their parents more often than the 10th graders do.

Table 17 shows the answers given by the parents, being asked how often they talk to their children about their use of the various media (Q9). As far as the various visual media are concerned, the number of parents reporting that they often talk to their children is higher than the number of children saying they often discuss with their parents. When it comes to the auditory media CD or cassette player, walkman/discman and radio, on the other hand, there is some trend in the opposite direction. This discrepancy may have various explanations. As far as the visual media are concerned, there is a possibility that parents exaggerate a little, consciously or unconsciously, because they may think they ought to talk to their children a little bit more than they do. Another possibility may be that children underreport how often they discuss the use of media with their parents. We saw a similar difference between answers given by the children and by the parents, concerning to what extent they use the media together. Another possibility is that the children think of discussing for example playing music at a high sound level, a type of discussion which perhaps was not been in the mind of the parents when they answered the questionnaire.

Table 17. Parents' answers to: How often do you talk to your children about their use of the various media listed below? Percentages. N=301.

	never	very little	a little	a lot	a great deal
TV (NRK/TV 2/TVN)	4,0	9,0	31,2	43,5	4,7
Cable/satellite TV	13,3	9,3	19,3	24,6	4,3
Video/VCR	8,6	18,9	37,5	17,9	1,7
TV-games	17,9	16,6	26,2	13,3	3,3
Computer games	6,3	17,6	28,9	29,2	5,3
PC with the Internet	7,3	8,0	22,9	40,2	6,6
PC without the Internet	17,6	12,6	21,9	8,0	0,7
CD or cassette player	19,3	36,5	32,6	5,6	1,0
Walkman/discman	40,2	20,6	17,3	0,7	0,3
Radio	40,9	24,9	19,3	2,3	0,3
Mobile phone	7,0	13,6	28,6	27,6	8,0
Cinema	16,9	22,9	34,2	11,6	0,7

The children are also asked how they experience discussions of media with their parents and with their friends (Q14). Table 18 shows that the majority tend to choose the alternative “both positive and negative” when asked about discussions with their parents. Among the 6th graders 23 % say “positive” and 5,5 % “negative”, while among the 10th graders there are nearly as many negative as positive answers. 37 % of the 6th graders and 40 % of the 10th graders answer positive when asked how they experience discussions of media with friends, but here too, “both positive and negative” is the alternative getting most support.

Table 18. How do you experience to discuss your use of the media with your parents/guardians and your friends? Percentages. 6th grade: N=291. 10th grade: N=212.

	6 th grade		10 th grade	
	Parents	Friends	Parents	Friends
Positive	23,0	36,8	12,3	40,1
Negative	5,5	4,5	10,4	0,9
Both positive and negative	55,3	43,0	65,6	47,2
Neither positive nor negative	9,3	10,0	9,4	9,0
Not answered	6,9	5,8	2,4	2,8

We see from table 19 that a little more than 70 % of the children in both age groups maintain that parents interfere in their use of media at home (Q6:36:10:54), for example by commenting on how they spend their time and what they should watch. While most of them say the parents “rarely” interfere, a little more than a quarter of the children in both age groups maintain that parents do interfere “often”. More 10th graders than 6th graders say their parents never interfere with their use of media at home, while, for some reason or other, more 6th graders than 10th graders say they will not answer the question.

Table 19. Do your parents/guardians interfere in your use of the media at home, e.g. by commenting on how you spend your time, what you should watch etc? Percentages. 6th grade: N=291. 10th grade: N=212.

	6 th grade	10 th grade
Never	8,9	22,2
Rarely	43,6	46,2
Often	27,5	27,4
Will not answer	13,7	2,8
Not answered	6,2	1,4

55 % of the 10th graders say that their parents, when interfering with their use of media, are mostly concerned about the danger that the use of media affects their homework (Q10:55). In addition, they are concerned that their children must get enough sleep. Only 13 % of the 10th graders think that their parents are mostly concerned about the content of the program when they interfere, and below 10 % think their parents interfere because of being concerned about the amount of money spent on for example renting videos and buying games. The 6th graders experience to a greater extent than the 10th graders that their parents are concerned with the content of the program, 24 % of them think their parents are mostly concerned about that when they interfere. However, also in this age group, the children think their parents are mostly concerned that they do not go to bed too late (31 %) and that the use of the media should not effect their homework (26 %). Here, too, more 6th graders than 10th graders have answered “don't know” or not answered at all.

The results referred here can be compared with the parents’ answers when asked if the use of the media is the cause of major or minor conflicts in the home (Q14). Four possible areas of conflict were mentioned in the question: choice of program, content of the program, time for bed, and how much time one should spend on the media. Each of those four areas gets between 50 and 60 % “yes” from the parents (table 20). We notice that the parents mention conflicts concerning the choice of program and the content of the program as often as they mention conflicts about bedtime and how much time is spent on media.

Table 20. Parents' answers to: Is the use of the media the cause of major or minor conflicts in the home? If so, in what areas? Percentages. N=301.

	Yes	No	Not answered
About choice of program	54,8	37,5	7,6
About the content of the program	57,5	34,9	7,6
About time for bed	51,8	41,9	6,3
About how much time one should spend on the media	58,1	35,2	6,6

On being asked how difficult they feel it is to regulate their children's use of the media in relation to their own conviction (Q19), 5 % of the parents say "very difficult", 35 % "somewhat difficult" and 44 % "average". 12 % say it is easy, and 4 % have not answered the question.

4.2.7 A brief summary

The results presented show that children and young people in Møre og Romsdal are active users of visual media. Most of them have access to TV, video, and the Internet, and spend much time using it. It is striking how many more boys than girls who have visual media equipment in their own room.

The main motives for using visual media, are seeking entertainment and excitement. Comedies and comedy series is the most popular genre, together with action films. These genres are popular with both genders, though more boys than girls prefer action films. On the other hand, more girls than boys like romantic films. Cartoons are popular among the 6th graders, but seem to have lost most of their attraction at 15-16 years of age.

The most popular TV programs among our respondents, are *Hotel Caesar* and *Friends*. These series are the most popular ones in both age groups, but with *Hotel Caesar* as the winner in 6th grade and *Friends* in 10th grade.

The children's use of media is to some extent a source of conflict in most homes. The children experience that their parents are most concerned about the time spent on the media, the danger that their use of media may interfere with their homework and that they may not get enough sleep. The parents experience the content of the program as much as a source of conflict.

4.3 Children's and young people's analysis of two selected TV programs

As mentioned in 4.2, the TV series *Hotel Caesar* and *Friends* turned out to be the favorite TV programs of 6th graders and 10th graders respectively.

The second time we visited the schools, we showed an episode from *Hotel Caesar* to the 6th graders, and one episode from *Friends* to the 10th graders. The episodes were picked at random, both for *Hotel Caesar* and *Friends*, without paying attention to the specific content of these particular episodes.

After we had shown the episodes, our pre-prepared literacy analysis form was distributed to the pupils immediately. The researchers gave no comments on the episodes prior to the filling in of the forms. After the pupils had completed the filling in of the form, the forms were collected. There then followed an informal discussion of on average half an hour, where the researchers interacted with the pupils on various aspects of the episode just shown. During this informal session fruit was served. The inputs from the pupils during this discussion were interesting and thought-provoking.

As the two age levels have analyzed different programs, the results will be presented for each age level separately. Tables showing results from the written literacy analysis form present results from both genders combined, as there are no noticeable differences between boys and girls in the written answers. In order to bring about a more complete picture of the views in the age groups, statements from single pupils, given in interviews or as comments to open questions in the literacy forms, are included.

4.3.1 6th grade – Analysis of *Hotel Caesar*

285 pupils filled in the literacy analysis form, which is close to 100 % participation. Those few missing were absent due to illness.

Table 21 shows the answers to question 1, asking what age group they think the program is made for. There were four alternatives. They were allowed to mark for more than one alternative, but few pupils have done so. The answers show that 90 % of the pupils think that *Hotel Caesar* is made primarily for those below 18 years of age. Three quarters of the pupils think the program is made for those below 15.

Table 21. Which age group do you think “Hotel Caesar” is made for? Percentages. N=285.

	Boys	Girls	Total
8-12 year-olds	24,0	7,6	16,5
13-15 year-olds	53,4	63,0	59,3
16-18 year-olds	13,0	24,4	17,2
Adults	11,6	8,4	9,8

However, in their comments to an open question, a few 6th graders express another view. One of them says “It is a sick program!”, and maintains that the program should have had 15 years as its age limit. The reason is that there is too much drugs, drunken people and swearing. Another one, who even argues for 18 years as the age limit, says that “they should have treated issues in a more serious way”.

The children were asked how they experience the people in the program, whether they seem genuine or they exaggerate, and whether they do care about what is right and wrong (Q2). Table 22 shows that more than 40 % of the 6th graders think people in *Hotel Caesar* are genuine. At the same time, three quarters of them think people exaggerate. As many as 68 % think people do not care about what is right and wrong, and a little over half of them that people do not make any effort to act in a correct manner. Some pupils, from 10 to almost 25 %, have not answered these questions.

Table 22. How do you experience the people in the program? Percentages. N=285.

The people in the program ...	Yes	No	Not answered
... seem genuine	41,1	47,4	11,6
... exaggerate	74,4	15,4	10,2
... care about what is right and wrong	15,1	68,1	16,8
... make an effort to act in a correct manner	24,6	51,2	24,2

The children have got only three alternative answers to the question about why they think this program has been made (Q3), and one of them is “don’t know”. 69,5 % have chosen the alternative “it is first and foremost meant to entertain”, while 4,6 % maintain that it is first and

foremost meant to inform. The rest have said “don’t know”, or not answered. This question is followed up in question 4, where the pupils are asked to say how they think those who have made the program want to influence them. The answers confirm what they answered to the former question, most children think those who made the program just want them to have fun when watching it (see table 23). However, as many as 26 % of the 6th graders think that the program makers first and foremost want to teach them something about adult life, and more than 60 % have this choice among the two highest ranked alternatives.

Table 23. How do you think those who have made this program want it to affect you? (Put 1 next to what you think they most want, then 2 and 3). Percentages. N=285.

Alternative	Rank nr 1	Rank nr 2
They just want you to have fun when you watch the program	56,5	12,3
They want you to buy the type of clothes you see in the program	3,5	9,8
They want to teach us something about adult life	26,0	36,5
They want to communicate values that they themselves are concerned with	9,8	23,2

In question 5 the children are asked what feelings they get when they are watching this program. Six alternatives are given, in addition to “don’t know”, and they are allowed to mark more than one alternative. More than 60 % have answered that they think the program is exciting, while 16 % say they become indifferent (table 24). A few say that they get angry, frightened, aggressive or depressed, these alternatives score between 5 % and 10 %. It may not be a surprise that close to one third of the pupils have answered “don’t know” to this question.

Table 24. What feelings do you get when you are watching the program? (Check one or more alternatives). Percentages. N=285.

think it is exciting	62,8
get angry	9,8
get frightened	5,3
become aggressive	6,0
get depressed	8,1
become indifferent	15,1
don’t know	32,3

The next two questions (Q6 and Q7) in the literacy analysis form deal explicitly with the values passed on by the program. It is seen from table 25 that most pupils find that people in *Hotel Caesar* are dishonest and do not tell the truth. About three quarters mark these alternatives, against just about 15 % for the alternatives “tell the truth” and “honest”. Accordingly, close to 70 % have marked that people solve conflicts in a bad way. About 60 % think that people who are different are made fun of, while about 30 % think they are being respected. These answers may indicate that the pupils are critical to the values in the program, but perhaps this is just what makes them feel the program is exciting. However, one cannot leave out of account the possibility that they have learned that they should be critical to *Hotel Caesar*. We therefore do not know to what degree the results in table 25 are based solely on their own reflection.

Table 25. What kind of values do you find in the program? Percentages. N=285.

People ...	tell the truth 15,4	do not tell the truth 76,8
People are ...	honest 13,0	dishonest 75,8
People solve conflicts ...	in a good way 21,1	in a bad way 69,1
People who are different are	made fun of 59,3	respected 29,5
You notice some people because they are	extra nasty 64,6	extra nice 24,2

It is obvious from table 26 that the pupils experience a clear difference between the values they meet in this program and the values they learn in school, on nearly all the values included in the question. The difference is particularly clear in relation to the use of alcohol and narcotics. More than 70 % of the pupils characterize this difference as big. More than 60 % of the pupils do the same in relation to swearing. Also when it comes to honesty, politeness, obedience, respect for other people, stealing, brutality and violence, most pupils think there is a difference between *Hotel Caesar* and what they learn in school. The only values mentioned in the question where more than 20 % of the pupils have marked for no difference, concern responsibility for the environment and equal treatment of boys and girls.

Table 26. What do you think of the values you meet in this program compared to those you learn at school? (Check one square on each line below). Percentages. N=285.

	No difference	Slight difference	Big difference	Not answered
Be honest	9,1	34,7	54,0	2,1
Show respect/caring	12,6	44,6	40,4	2,5
Obey your parents/guardians	17,5	32,3	46,3	3,9
Speak politely	11,9	29,8	54,4	3,9
Tell the truth	12,6	37,5	46,3	3,5
Respect other people	11,2	45,6	39,3	3,9
Don't be brutal towards others	14,0	31,6	48,1	6,4
Solve problems by talking	14,7	44,2	37,2	3,9
Don't use violence and vandalism	15,4	22,5	56,5	5,6
Show responsibility for the environment	26,7	35,4	33,7	4,2
Avoid alcohol/narcotics	10,9	11,9	71,6	5,7
No backbiting or gossip	14,7	37,2	42,8	5,3
Don't steal/shoplift	12,3	30,5	52,6	4,6
Don't swear	14,7	20,4	61,1	3,9
Treat boys and girls the same (equality)	32,3	36,5	27,4	3,9

Then the children are asked if there is anything they would like to be different in the program (Q8). 68 % of the children would have liked more humor in the program, and slightly over 50 % more excitement and drama (see table 27). This result corresponds well with the results

from 4.2, that children and young people give high priority to entertainment and excitement when they watch TV. Each of the three other alternatives has been marked by a little more than one third of the pupils. Those alternatives consider the way people talk to each other, the way they solve problems and the use of alcohol. We notice that, even if the children are aware of the differences in values between the program and school, and some of them even give the program relatively hard criticism because of that, there is a much more widespread wish to have more excitement and humor in the program than there is a wish to change the values.

Table 27. *Is there anything you would like to have been different in this program? (Check one or more squares). Percentages. N=285.*

You ...	
... would have liked people to talk differently to each other	34,7
... would have liked them to solve problems in a different way	38,9
... would have liked more humor in the program	68,1
... would have liked more excitement and drama in the program	51,2
... did not want the program to be so dominated by the use of alcohol	37,9

Finally, the pupils were in question 9 invited to give further comments on the program in their own words. About 200 of a total number of 285 took the opportunity. Reading through the replies, there is a clear dominance of critical and negative comments on the program. The program is criticized, particularly for sex, swearing and the extensive use of alcohol. Here is one of the negative comments:

It is stupid that they show so much violence. The program is shown quite early in the evening. From time to time it is quite amusing, but I am not allowed to look at it. It is rubbish-TV most of the time.

However, the entertainment aspect is often mentioned as something positive. One pupil writes:

It is fun to look at when something exciting happens. This is not wrong, it is almost exactly what happens almost daily in real life, not all, but most of it.

Some of the comments show that even if the parents refuse to allow the child to look at the program, the pupil is nevertheless well informed and seems to be able to see the program in some way or another. On the other hand, one has to wonder if the critical attitude from the pupils is due to their ability to reflect or if they have been influenced by parents and teachers to be critical. It is striking that so many 6th graders have critical comments to *Hotel Caesar* and to the values in the series, at the same time as the program is clearly the most popular one in this age group.

4.3.2 10th grade – Analysis of *Friends*

In the 10th grade 204 pupils have filled in the literacy analysis form. This is close to 100 % participation, and those few missing in the classes were absent due to illness.

The episode watched, was from Series 6, episode 21, production year: 2000. The episode was picked at random.

Table 28 shows the answers to question 1, asking which age groups they think the program is made for. There were four alternative categories, and they were allowed to mark more than one category. Most of the pupils seem to think that *Friends* is made for their own age group and older teen-agers. 51 % have marked 13-15 year-olds and 67 % 16-18 year-olds. Just about

10 % think the program is made for adults too, and not more than 2,5 % think it is made for those aged 12 and below.

Table 28. Which age group do you think “Friends” is made for? Percentages. N=204.

Under 12 year-olds	2,5
13-15 year-olds	51,0
16-18 year-olds	66,7
Adults	9,8

Question 2 asks for their opinion about why the program has been made. Among the three alternative answers, as many as 90 % have just marked the alternative “it is first and foremost meant to entertain”. Less than 10 % have marked that is first and foremost meant to make a financial profit, and scarcely anyone thinks it is made to inform.

This question is followed up in question 3, where the pupils answer how they think those who have made the program want it to affect them. Table 29 shows that more than 90 % think they first and foremost want them to have fun when they watch the program, and more than a quarter of the pupils have not made use of the possibility to give some alternative a second priority. As a whole, the answers to this question indicate a high degree of agreement among the 10th graders that *Friends* is made just to entertain. Nevertheless, it is worth noticing that just a few of them have given priority to “they want to teach us something about adult life”, and “they want you to buy the types of clothes you see in the program”.

Table 29. How do you think those who have made this program want it to affect you? (Put 1 next to what you think they most want, then 2 and 3). Percentages. N=204.

Alternative	Rank nr 1	Rank nr 2
They just want you to have fun when you watch the program	91,7	3,9
They want you to buy the type of clothes you see in the program	2,9	19,1
They want to teach us something about adult life	3,4	25,5
They want to communicate values that they themselves are concerned with	0,0	23,5

Question 4 asks the 10th graders to say how they experience the persons in *Friends*, whether they seem genuine or not, whether they exaggerate, whether they care about what is right or wrong and make an effort to behave in a correct manner. The 10th graders were presented with statements about the persons, and asked to disagree or agree with the statements, on a 7-graded scale. The opinions clearly differ, as the answers are spread over the whole scale (table 30). However, we notice that a majority of the pupils experience the persons as genuine, and do not feel that they exaggerate. A little more than half of the pupils agree, at least a little, that the persons make an effort to behave in a correct manner, and think they care about what is right or wrong.

Table 30. How do you experience the persons in the production? Percentages. N=204.

They ...	Disagree completely	Disagree a lot	Disagree A little	Neither agree or disagree	Agree a little	Agree a lot	Agree completely
... seem genuine	2,0	6,9	14,7	21,1	27,5	21,1	6,9
... exaggerate	2,0	8,8	9,3	12,7	40,7	20,6	5,9
... do not care about what is right or wrong	11,3	19,1	17,2	24,0	19,1	6,9	2,0
... care about what is right and wrong	2,0	3,9	10,8	21,6	30,4	19,6	7,4
... make an effort to behave in a correct manner	0,5	4,9	15,7	25,5	32,8	18,1	2,0

Question 5 asks the pupils what feelings they get when they are watching the program. Six alternative answers are listed, and they are allowed to mark one or more of them. More than 80 % have answered that they think it is exciting and fascinating, and 30 % say they become indifferent. The other alternatives, angry, frightened, aggressive, and depressed, get no support (see table 31).

Table 31. What feelings to get when you are watching the program? (Check one or more alternatives). Percentages. N=204.

You ...	
... think it is exciting and fascinating	81,9
... get angry	0,0
... get frightened	1,0
... become aggressive	0,0
... get depressed	0,5
... become indifferent	29,9

The 10th graders have been asked to answer on a 7-graded scale in question 6, too. This question asks what kind of values they find in the program. We see from table 32 that close to 30 % neither agree nor disagree with the statements that persons are honest and tell the truth, but the number of pupils agreeing is somewhat higher than the number disagreeing. When asked if the extra unpleasant actors are revealed for what they are, close to half of the pupils neither agree nor disagree. A possible reason in this case might be that they do not find any extra unpleasant actors in the program. However, the responses to the statements about people who are different, may be worthy of note. Half of the 10th graders agree, at least a little, that people who are different are made fun of in the program. At the same time, 36 % neither agree nor disagree that people who are different are shown respect, and the number agreeing is higher than the number disagreeing. The positive statement getting most support from the 10th graders, is "People solve conflicts in a good way".

Table 32. What kind of values do you find in the program? Percentages. N=204.

Values: ...	Disagree completely	Disagree A lot	Disagree a little	Neither agree or disagree	Agree a little	Agree a lot	Agree completely
People tell the truth	1,5	5,4	24,5	29,4	27,5	8,8	2,9
People are honest	1,5	3,4	25,0	27,0	27,9	13,2	2,0
People solve conflicts in a good way	1,0	4,9	22,1	15,2	28,9	20,6	7,4
People who are different are made fun of	6,9	10,3	10,8	22,1	27,5	13,7	8,8
People who are different are shown respect	2,9	5,4	21,6	35,8	23,5	8,8	2,0
The extra unpleasant actors are revealed for what they are	2,9	2,0	6,9	48,0	22,1	13,2	3,9

In question 7, the pupils are asked what they think of the values they meet in this program compared to those they learn at school. It becomes clear from table 33 that the pupils experience a clear difference between the values in the program and the values taught in school on most of the values included in the question. More than 60 % think the program places less emphasis on avoiding alcohol/narcotics, and more than half of the pupils think the same is the case in relation to values like honesty, obedience, politeness and avoiding backbiting and gossip and swearing. Just a few pupils (way below 10 %) think the program places more emphasis on such values than school does. When it comes to respecting other people and avoiding stealing, violence and vandalism, quite a lot of pupils (between 40 and 50 %) think these values are as much emphasized in the program as in school. Just about 10 % think these values are more emphasized in the program than in school, while quite a lot think they are less emphasized in the program. Most pupils experience the issue of equality between boys and girls as being as much emphasized in the program as in school, and those maintaining a different view, are almost equally distributed on both sides. The only value mentioned which quite a few (about 30 %) find more emphasized in the program than in school, is about solving problems by talking. The questions regarding respecting other religions and cultures and showing responsibility for the environment have received about 30 % “don’t know”. Probably many pupils have found these questions difficult to answer. The majority of the answers, however, go in the direction of these values being less emphasized in the program than in school.

Table 33. What do you think of the values you meet in this program compared to those you learn at school? (Check one square on each line below). Percentages. N=204.

	Emphasized less in the program than at school	Emphasized as much in the program as at school	Emphasized more in the program than at school	Don't know
Be honest	54,9	24,0	5,4	15,2
Obey your parents/guardians	52,5	23,0	7,4	16,7
Speak politely	56,4	27,9	5,4	9,3
Respect other people	33,8	48,0	9,3	7,8
Solve problems by talking	19,6	41,7	29,9	8,3
Don't use violence and vandalism	22,5	41,7	10,8	23,5
Show responsibility for the environment	42,6	17,2	5,4	32,4
Avoid alcohol/narcotics	61,3	11,8	4,4	20,1
No backbiting or gossip	52,9	23,5	9,3	12,7
Don't steal/shoplift	31,4	42,2	8,3	17,6
Don't swear	55,4	25,0	5,9	12,3
Treat boys and girls the same (equality)	13,7	57,4	15,7	11,3
Respect other religions and cultures	28,4	39,2	4,4	27,5

On this background, it is very interesting to notice that relatively few 10th graders mention anything they want to be different in the program (table 34). Question 8 lists four alternative answers to the question, and a little more than a quarter of the 10th graders say they would have liked more humor in the program. 12 % say they would have liked the persons to solve problems in a different way. Less than 5 % mention the use of alcohol and the way people talk to each other.

Table 34. Is there anything you would like to have been different in this program? Percentages. N=204.

You ...	
... would have liked people to talk differently to each other	4,4
... would have liked them to solve problems in a different way	12,3
... would have liked more humor in the program	27,5
... did not want the program to be so dominated by the use of alcohol	4,4

The analysis form given to the 10th graders ends up with a question where they are asked to write a few words on how they evaluate the morals in the program in comparison with what they have learnt at school. 175 of the 204 pupils participating, have given their comments.

Most of the comments are mainly positive, both concerning the program as such and with regard to the morals. Just a few comments are more critical, while some seem to think it is irrelevant to ask about morals, as the program emphasizes humor and entertainment.

One pupil writes:

All "Friends" episodes actually conclude with a moral message, but they communicate this moral in an amusing way. They manage to present the message in a humorous way.

Another one says:

All in this series are impulsive, and often do things without deep reflection. At school we have to argue for our views when conflicts arise. The morals in this series are fine, and here is humor. It is not wrong to look at this program.

Some pupils show that they find the morals somewhat different from the morals they learn at school, but seem to find this as an advantage of the program rather than a drawback. One says:

I like this program. In this program the morals are more like the morals of young people. The school has "adult morals".

Another comment goes like this:

The way the persons in this TV series live is not completely in accordance with what we have learned at school, for example when it comes to the use of alcohol etc. But alcohol has sometimes to be used to create funny situations.

One pupil writes:

The participants in "Friends" do not always have the ability to see what is right and what is wrong and to be polite. However, it is not the purpose of this program that we should learn anything. We shall just be entertained, and this they are able to do in an excellent way.

As an example of a comment which rejects the question as irrelevant, one pupils simply writes:

What has this to do with morals?

Another pupil gives a voice to this reaction in a somewhat more considered way:

I consider it to be totally impossible to contrast a TV program with school education. The TV program is produced mainly for entertainment, while the teaching at school is intended to give both general knowledge and ethical reflection. I look at TV when I intend to relax.

Finally we present a couple of quotations from pupils whose reflections on the moral issue have made them somewhat more critical to the program. One pupil writes:

This program has lower morals than what we have at school. The actors have more relaxed attitudes on how to relate to and treat other persons. At school for example, we are not allowed to ridicule other persons, but in this program they quite a bit make a fool of each other.

Another pupil with an attitude to the program being both positive and somewhat critical, says:

The morals are not so very different from what we learn in school, but a little different. The plot is about six young people trying to find the meaning of life and their moral

attitudes are not highly profiled, but it is fun. It is OK that the program is shown that late in the evening.

4.3.3 Final comments on the analysis of *Hotel Caesar* and *Friends*

The pupils in both age groups seem to be aware of the different emphasis on values between their favorite program and school. However, the two age groups differ in how they react to this difference. The 6th graders give many critical comments on *Hotel Caesar*, while the 10th graders seem to be quite satisfied with *Friends* as it is. They find the program entertaining, and that is what they want it to be. To the extent that they want any changes in the program, they want even more humor. So do the 6th graders, too, in relation to *Hotel Caesar*, but in addition, they express wishes which would bring about more conformity with the values in school. One may wonder to what degree this is their own wishes, or the comments are influenced by an adult view and conflicts in their homes. There is reason to believe that the 6th graders do not control their own use of the TV as much as the 10th graders do, and the comments given in their own words indicate that at least some of them would like changes in the series which would make it easier to be given permission to see the program at home. On the other hand, some 10th graders may perhaps want to oppose the adult values of school through exaggerating their satisfaction with the program. The comments in their own words indicate that a few of them have felt somewhat provoked by being asked to particularly evaluate the morals of a program like this.

4.4 Perceptions of the influence from visual media

This part of the chapter directs the attention to questions regarding the influence of media. The pupils' own viewpoints are in focus, as they express them through questionnaires and interviews. On some of the issues the views of the children are compared to the views expressed by parents and teachers in their questionnaires and interviews.

Issues considered are whether the influence from visual media is positive or negative, and in what areas and in what direction the influence works. Values in visual media are compared to values emphasized in school, and here we also refer to 4.3, where results from the pupils' analysis of their favorite programs were presented. At the end of 4.4 we look at the pupils' view of the strength of the influence from media, compared to other sources of influence, and their view is compared to views expressed by their parents and teachers.

4.4.1 Is the influence positive or negative?

Both 6th graders and 10th graders have been asked a general question about how they think they are influenced by the media. To the 10th graders, the question was specified (Q47), making it possible to give different answers for different types of media. The 6th graders, on the other hand, answered one general question: "How do you think the visual media influence you?"(Q32).

One of the alternatives was "both positively and negatively", and reasonably enough, this alternative is most frequently chosen. In 6th grade 40,5 % choose this alternative, while 23,4 % think they are influenced "mostly positively" and just 2,4 % say "mostly negatively". 30,6 % of the 6th graders have answered "Don't know", or have not given an answer at all. The alternative "neither positively or negatively" is used by 3,1 %. Apparently, a number of 6th graders have found it difficult to answer, and just a few think they are not being influenced much. For the rest, they are aware that they are being influenced both positively and negatively, but as a whole the majority of 6th graders regard the influence as mainly positive.

From table 35 we see that more than half of the 10th graders say that the influence from TV and video is both positive and negative. As regards PC with Internet, more than half think the influence is mostly positive, while there is more variation in the answers regarding computer games and TV games. As a whole we may say, for the 10th graders too, that the influence is regarded to be mostly positive, even though most of them are aware of being influenced in both directions.

Table 35. The 10th graders' answers to the question: How do you think the visual media influence you? Percentages. N=212.

	Mostly positive	Both positive and negative	Mostly negative	Don't know
TV	42,5	50,9	0,5	6,2
Video	33,5	57,1	2,8	6,6
Video camera	42,5	8,5	2,4	46,7
TV games	25,9	27,4	13,7	33,0
Computer games	28,8	31,6	10,8	28,8
PC with the Internet	52,4	35,4	1,4	10,8
PC without the Internet	38,7	18,9	3,8	38,7
Cinema	41,5	43,9	1,9	12,8

Question 47 includes some types of media having no direct influence, for example a video camera. When more than 40 % say that a video camera influences them mostly positively, it may be interpreted as viewing the use of video camera as a positive activity. Accordingly, there may be reason to believe that the 10-14 % expressing that TV games and computer games influence them mostly negatively, do not necessarily think of the content of the games, but perhaps of spending too much time on games.

The parents, too, have been asked about what effect they think visual media have on their children (P18). As many as 89,4 % of the parents choose the in-between alternative "both positive and negative". The rest is almost evenly distributed between "positive on the whole" (4,7 %), "negative on the whole" (3,0 %) and not answered (3,0 %).

The questionnaire then specifies some areas where one can be influenced by the media (Q6:33;10:48). This question is posed in the same way to both age groups, and their replies have been summarized in table 36.

Table 36. Below are some areas in which you can be influenced by the media. For each area, check to what extent you feel you are influenced. Percentages. 6th grade: N=291. 10th grade: N=212.

	Grade level	To a great extent	To some extent	To a slight extent	Not at all	Don't know
I learn more respect for other people	6 th	13,7	29,2	17,9	5,8	33,4
	10 th	12,3	33,5	26,9	8,5	18,8
I get idols that I can admire	6 th	25,1	21,3	16,5	7,6	29,5
	10 th	36,3	30,2	19,3	8,5	5,6
I am influenced by the commercials	6 th	4,5	7,6	26,1	37,5	24,4
	10 th	10,8	25,9	35,8	21,2	6,1
I become more critical to Advertising	6 th	7,9	11,7	15,5	25,8	39,2
	10 th	17,5	27,4	25,5	12,7	16,9
I become more skeptical to the usual norms about right and wrong	6 th	11,7	16,8	17,9	17,5	36,1
	10 th	3,3	22,6	28,3	28,3	17,5
I see more clearly the need for norms about right and wrong	6 th	24,4	25,8	13,4	8,9	27,5
	10 th	17,0	34,9	19,8	13,7	14,6
I get more compassion for people who are suffering	6 th	33,0	26,5	12,0	5,2	23,3
	10 th	42,0	30,7	14,2	5,7	7,5
I get less compassion for people who are suffering	6 th	8,6	5,8	11,3	36,1	38,1
	10 th	3,8	6,1	16,5	59,4	14,2
I more easily accept the use of violence to solve a problem	6 th	10,3	18,2	18,2	21,6	31,6
	10 th	6,6	12,3	27,4	41,0	12,8
I get to hate the idea of using violence to solve a problem	6 th	10,3	14,4	20,6	15,5	39,1
	10 th	12,7	18,4	19,8	27,4	21,7
I become apathetic and couldn't care less	6 th	6,9	4,8	16,8	35,4	36,0
	10 th	8,0	16,0	32,1	32,5	11,1

* The "don't know"-column includes not answered, in most cases 5-7% in the 6th grade and 1-2 % in the 10th grade.

We notice that the 6th graders have a higher percentage of "don't know" than the 10th graders. Probably this is the result of the 12 year-olds having found the questions more difficult. In most areas, however, there is a reasonable degree of agreement between the two age groups about how they are being influenced. Getting more compassion for people who are suffering, is the kind of influence reported by most pupils. Getting idols that are admired gets a high score, too, and the same is the case of seeing more clearly the need for norms about right and wrong. However, here is some reason to a certain amount of skepticism to the answers given by some of the 6th graders, as some of them have marked both for being more skeptical to the usual norms and for seeing more clearly the need for norms. Even if this is not self-contradictory, it seems more probable that some 6th graders have had trouble with the formulations of this question. Nevertheless, there seems to be good reason to say that most of the children think they are influenced mainly in the positive direction. This is the case both for compassion and for norms for right and wrong, and in both age groups.

When it comes to questions about the use of violence in problem solving and about reactions to advertizing, there is more variation in the answers. The majority seems to think that they are not much influenced in relation to these issues. The variation is a signal that the visual media have different effects on different pupils. It is worth noticing that there are pupils, both

in 6th grade and in 10th grade, expressing that the media influence them to accept more easily the use of violence.

There is reason to question whether the results referred so far, tell the whole truth about how children are influenced by visual media. A new American study reveals that adult persons when asked similar questions about effects maintain that they themselves, personally experience no effect of media use, but certain other adults might be affected. These adults further maintain that children surely are being affected.¹⁰⁷

Some of the statements given in the interviews may help to throw more light on the influence of the media. A 10th grade girl voices her concern for smaller children being exposed to visual media, saying:

Let us consider those growing up with violence on TV and violent computer games. This must really do something with those children.

A 6th grade girl says:

If there is too much killing, I might get nightmares, but as a rule, movies do not make any impact on me.

When asked about what she feels as she watches someone being killed in a movie, the same girl says:

I actually feel it is top. I know that it is just fiction, but if it had been a real killing, then I would have felt it was completely a foolish act.

A 6th grade boy says:

I am not affected by anything I see on TV. This is my opinion. No, certainly, I am not affected. I don't run around with a knife in my pocket when I attend school.

These statements regarding violence may be interpreted as an illustration that there is more about the question of influence than is easily revealed through a question in a questionnaire. Children probably feel that they control the influence from the media world. Perhaps thinking about effects in a very concrete way, as the boy cited above seems to do, helps them feel that they have control. Nevertheless, they may give some signals, perhaps without being aware of it themselves, that complicate the picture a little. And they may, as the 10th grade girl quoted above, be worried about the influence on smaller children.

Some statements regarding advertizing illustrate the same phenomenon. One 10th grade girl says about the influence of commercials:

It certainly affects my everyday life. Because, when you see advertising for soft drinks on TV, you get a desire to buy a bottle. If you see biscuits, you will like to find out how they taste. Yes, I truly am affected by advertizing.

When asked about brands, the same pupil continues:

Up to now, I have not been so much concerned about having clothes of a special brand. I dress in the way I want to, but I have been influenced by others. Some friends, in a direct way ask me if I really do not use clothes of a particular brand. They make me aware of the fact that when I start at junior high school, I have to use clothes of that particular brand, if I want to be accepted by my classmates. I'm basically against being dressed like all others and I never bully anyone who chooses other types of

¹⁰⁷ W. James Potter: The 11 Myths of Media Violence, op.cit. Passim.

clothes. I feel it is a positive thing to be self-conscious, and it would be quite boring if all used the same types of trousers and sweaters.

It is worth noticing that this girl in her second statement cited attributes the influence to friends rather than to the media. And, of course, she tells about friends directly trying to influence her. But a relevant question is: what sources of influences have affected those friends? Where do new trends come from?

It appears that visual media may have both a direct and an indirect influence on young people. They may experience being influenced by friends, rather than by visual media. However, to the degree that the whole group of young people is being influenced by visual media, they all will, as individuals, be exposed to an influence stemming from visual media, but mediated by friends.¹⁰⁸

In an interview, one of the mothers gives an interesting comment on the effect of advertizing. After having given a rather lengthy comment on the effect on pressure to buy special clothes, she points out another effect of the advertising in the media which she feels more serious:

Young people get bombarded about the importance of being good-looking and that money and material things are important. Even if mother and father say that this is not so important, it is very difficult for young people to overlook the world of fame and glory that dominates so many visual media productions. I see this in my son, who is very eager to play soccer. He trains for hours every day. I notice that one reason for his dedication to his exercising every day is that he hopes to be good enough to be one of the young boys who become a millionaire due to his brilliant soccer playing.

The 10th graders have answered a question about the influence of visual media on their self image (Q10:63). Table 37 shows the answers for three kinds of visual media, TV, video, and cinema. They were asked to answer on a 7-level scale, but more than half of the 10th graders have chosen the mid-point level, thus expressing that visual media have had both a positive and a negative influence on their self-image. An even greater number say that the influence on their attitude towards other people has been both positive and negative.

Table 37. How do you think the visual media influence your image of yourself (... your attitudes towards other people)? 10th grade. N=212.

	Yourself			Other people		
	TV	Video	Cinema	TV	Video	Cinema
Very negatively	3,8	1,9	1,9	2,4	0,9	0,9
Negatively	2,4	2,8	0,9	0,5	1,9	0,9
Slightly negatively	7,5	8,0	6,1	3,3	2,8	0,5
Both positively and negatively	58,0	55,2	51,9	67,5	69,8	66,5
Slightly positively	5,7	10,4	10,4	7,5	7,5	9,9
Positively	12,3	11,8	18,4	12,7	9,9	11,3
Very positively	7,1	6,1	5,2	2,4	2,8	4,2
Not answered	3,3	3,8	5,2	3,8	4,2	5,7

¹⁰⁸ The result from American research cited above, that adults tend to think that they themselves are not much affected by media, but other adults are, may to some degree be explained as a result of the same mechanism.

In addition to those saying that they are influenced in both directions, close to 14 % state that TV has a negative influence on their self-image, while about 25 % report a positive influence. The corresponding numbers for video are close to 12 % and more than 30 %, respectively, and for cinema, close to 9 % and close to 40 %.

An open question gave the pupils the opportunity to give a further description of how visual media influence their self-image. Among the few persons having stated that visual media has a very negative influence on their self-image, we find girls saying that they become insecure when watching so many “perfect” girls and models on TV, and that it is easy to feel ugly, compared to them. A 10th grade girl, reflecting about idols and body fixation, says:

When I look at American TV-programs, the actors appearing are slim and nice looking. When I was smaller, I believed that all Americans were slim and perfect, but as I have grown older, I know that the real situation is quite opposite. Most Americans seem actually to be huge and fat. I have observed, however, that my friends try to be slim. I am personally not focused on being slim, I don't really care. I do not exercise to become slim and extremely thin. I exercise as long as it is fun, when I get bored, then I stop. My friends, however, well, not all of them, exercise to become slim and perfect, as they say, looking at me, who is a little stout.

Another girl, a 6th grader, gave this answer, when asked if those who refused to eat to become thin and slim are influenced by advertizing:

No, not the advertizing as such, but friends who say to their peers that they are too heavy. Then those pointed out as too stout, start losing weight through eating less to the extent that they get sick.

These quotations indicate further support to the idea discussed above, that friends do mediate and increase an influence which originally comes from the visual media.

One of the questions in the questionnaire focuses on the use of drugs (Q6:38;10:56). The pupils are asked how they think that the use of drugs, especially alcohol, in some TV programs, affects their own attitude to alcohol and other drugs. Table 38 shows that less than 3 % of the 6th graders and 5 % of the 10th graders think that TV programs will make them want to use more drugs in the future. As many as 30 % of the 6th graders think they will be less keen on using drugs in the future. We notice that more than 30 % of the 6th graders have answered “don't know”, or not answered at all. Perhaps that is the most adequate answer at 11-12 years of age. In 10th grade as many as 70 % think that TV will not affect their attitude to the use of drugs in the future.

Table 38. In some TV programs, the use of drugs, especially alcohol, is often part of the content of the program. How do you think that this affects your attitude to alcohol and other drugs? Percentages. 6th grade: N=291. 10th grade: N=212.

	6 th grade	10 th grade
I think it will make me want to use more drugs in the future	2,7	5,2
I think it will make me want to use less drugs in the future	30,9	14,2
I don't think that TV will affect my attitude to the use of drugs in the future	34,4	70,3
Don't want to answer/don't know	31,9	10,4

Summing up so far, one may ask to what degree influences on people's attitudes are adequately measured through self-report initiated by questions in a questionnaire or an

interview. Are the children able to and willing to give adequate answers? The apparent interaction between influence from the media and influence from peers, exemplified above, increases the complexity of the problem.

Some of the statements from the interviews may throw some light on this issue. Several incidents of apparently contradictory statements were encountered. For example, a 6th grade pupil admits to experiencing impact in a deep, emotional way, but he says that, “as a rule”, movies do not make any impact on him. We shall later, in chapter 5, elaborate on what this doubleness in their reflection might mean. For the present, we just conclude that visual media have some impact, both cognitively and emotionally. A 10th grade girl states it in these words:

Yes, I really think that people are being strongly influenced by the media, because they talk about what they have seen and heard in media programs all the time. Often they start quarrelling of what was said and what was not said in a given program.

And, when children and young people report about the direction of the influence, they, reasonably enough, say that they are being influenced both positively and negatively. However, at least when asked in a questionnaire, they are clear that the positive influence is stronger.

4.4.2 Value influence from visual media compared to the value influence of school

A special focus within problem area B regards the relation between values and attitudes in home and school on the one hand, and values and attitudes within “the parallel school” on the other hand.

The pupils have answered a question, equally formulated for both age groups, which deals directly with this issue (Q6:28;10:40).¹⁰⁹ The distribution of the answers is shown in table 39a and 39b, plus figure 2.

¹⁰⁹ Another question to the 10th graders was: Do you ever experience a conflict between what you learn at school and what you learn from the visual media? 92,5 % answer that they experience such a conflict “rarely” or “ever”, but the examples of such conflicts mentioned by other pupils, show that most of them have interpreted the word “learn” as regarding “knowledge” and not values or attitudes.

Table 39a. Below we have listed a number of values that most people feel are important in any society. You must now say to what extent these values are emphasized in the program you have chosen as number 1 in question 36, compared to the values that you learn at school. **10th grade. Percentages. N=212.**

Value	Gender	Emphasized less in the program than at school	Emphasized as much in the program as at school	Emphasized more in the program than at school	Don't know	N*
Being honest	Boys	53,4	22,3	5,8	18,4	103
	Girls	43,6	28,7	13,9	13,9	101
	B+G	48,5	25,5	9,8	16,2	204
Obeying your parents/guardians	Boys	45,1	24,5	10,8	19,6	102
	Girls	50,5	17,2	7,1	25,3	99
	B+G	47,8	20,9	9,0	22,4	201
Speaking politely	Boys	63,7	18,6	5,9	11,8	102
	Girls	59,0	25,0	4,0	12,0	100
	B+G	61,4	21,8	5,0	11,9	202
Show respect to others	Boys	45,1	26,5	14,7	13,7	102
	Girls	28,0	47,0	15,0	10,0	100
	B+G	36,6	36,6	14,9	11,9	202
Solving problems by talking	Boys	26,0	36,0	26,0	12,0	100
	Girls	9,0	44,0	32,0	15,0	100
	B+G	17,5	40,0	29,0	13,5	200
Not using violence and vandalism	Boys	33,3	31,4	19,6	15,7	102
	Girls	36,0	37,0	11,0	16,0	100
	B+G	34,7	34,2	15,3	15,8	202
Show responsibility for the environment	Boys	50,0	23,5	6,9	19,6	102
	Girls	38,1	26,8	4,1	30,9	97
	B+G	44,2	25,1	5,5	25,1	199
Avoid alcohol/ Narcotics	Boys	50,0	19,6	9,8	20,6	102
	Girls	51,0	21,0	8,0	20,0	100
	B+G	50,5	20,3	8,9	20,3	202
No backbiting or gossip	Boys	57,8	23,5	5,9	12,7	102
	Girls	54,5	23,8	6,9	14,9	101
	B+G	56,2	23,6	6,4	13,8	203
No stealing	Boys	39,0	32,0	13,0	16,0	100
	Girls	26,5	46,9	8,2	18,4	98
	B+G	32,8	39,4	10,6	17,2	198
Not swearing	Boys	61,2	21,4	3,9	13,6	103
	Girls	68,0	9,0	7,0	16,0	100
	B+G	64,5	15,3	5,4	14,8	203
Treat boys and girls the same (equality)	Boys	26,7	48,5	9,9	14,9	101
	Girls	13,1	54,5	12,1	20,2	99
	B+G	20,0	51,5	11,0	17,5	200
Respect other religions and cultures	Boys	39,0	33,0	11,0	17,0	100
	Girls	13,9	48,5	5,0	32,7	101
	B+G	26,4	40,8	8,0	24,9	201

* N=number of answers to the question about that value.

Table 39b. Below we have listed a number of values that most people feel are important in any society. You must now say to what extent these values are emphasized in the program you have chosen as number 1 in question 26, compared to the values that you learn at school. 6th grade. Percentages. N=291.

Value	Gender	Emphasized less in the program than at school	Emphasized as much in the program as at school	Emphasized more in the program than at school	Don't know	N*
Being honest	Boys	47,6	13,3	18,2	21,0	143
	Girls	53,6	23,2	1,6	21,6	125
	B+G	50,4	17,9	10,4	21,3	268
Obeying your parents/guardians	Boys	37,4	26,0	9,9	28,7	131
	Girls	47,1	30,6	5,8	16,5	121
	B+G	42,1	28,2	7,9	21,8	252
Speaking politely	Boys	46,0	28,8	9,4	15,8	139
	Girls	54,3	29,3	3,4	12,0	116
	B+G	49,8	29,0	6,7	14,5	255
Show respect to others	Boys	39,6	26,9	10,4	23,1	134
	Girls	43,2	39,0	4,2	13,6	118
	B+G	41,3	32,5	7,5	18,7	252
Solving problems by talking	Boys	29,6	29,6	14,1	26,7	135
	Girls	32,8	39,3	12,3	15,6	122
	B+G	31,1	34,2	13,2	21,4	257
Not using violence and vandalism	Boys	34,1	22,2	17,8	25,9	135
	Girls	38,3	28,3	10,8	22,5	120
	B+G	36,1	25,1	14,5	24,3	255
Show responsibility for the environment	Boys	34,8	28,8	6,8	29,5	132
	Girls	38,8	29,8	7,4	24,0	121
	B+G	36,8	29,2	7,1	26,9	253
Avoid alcohol/narcotics	Boys	35,1	20,1	13,4	31,3	134
	Girls	40,0	31,7	5,8	22,5	120
	B+G	37,4	25,6	9,8	27,2	254
No backbiting or gossip	Boys	45,9	22,6	5,3	26,3	133
	Girls	49,6	22,3	6,6	21,5	121
	B+G	47,6	22,4	5,9	24,0	254
No stealing	Boys	39,0	21,3	14,0	25,7	136
	Girls	41,7	31,7	7,5	19,2	120
	B+G	40,2	26,2	10,9	22,7	256
Not swearing	Boys	49,6	18,0	10,8	21,6	139
	Girls	52,4	21,0	5,6	21,0	124
	B+G	51,0	19,4	8,4	21,3	263
Treat boys and girls the same (equality)	Boys	29,1	35,8	8,2	26,9	134
	Girls	23,3	43,3	8,3	25,0	120
	B+G	26,4	39,4	8,3	26,0	254
Respect other religions and cultures	Boys	24,0	31,8	7,8	36,4	129
	Girls	30,8	30,8	4,3	34,2	117
	B+G	27,2	31,3	6,1	35,4	246

* N=number of answers to the question about that value.

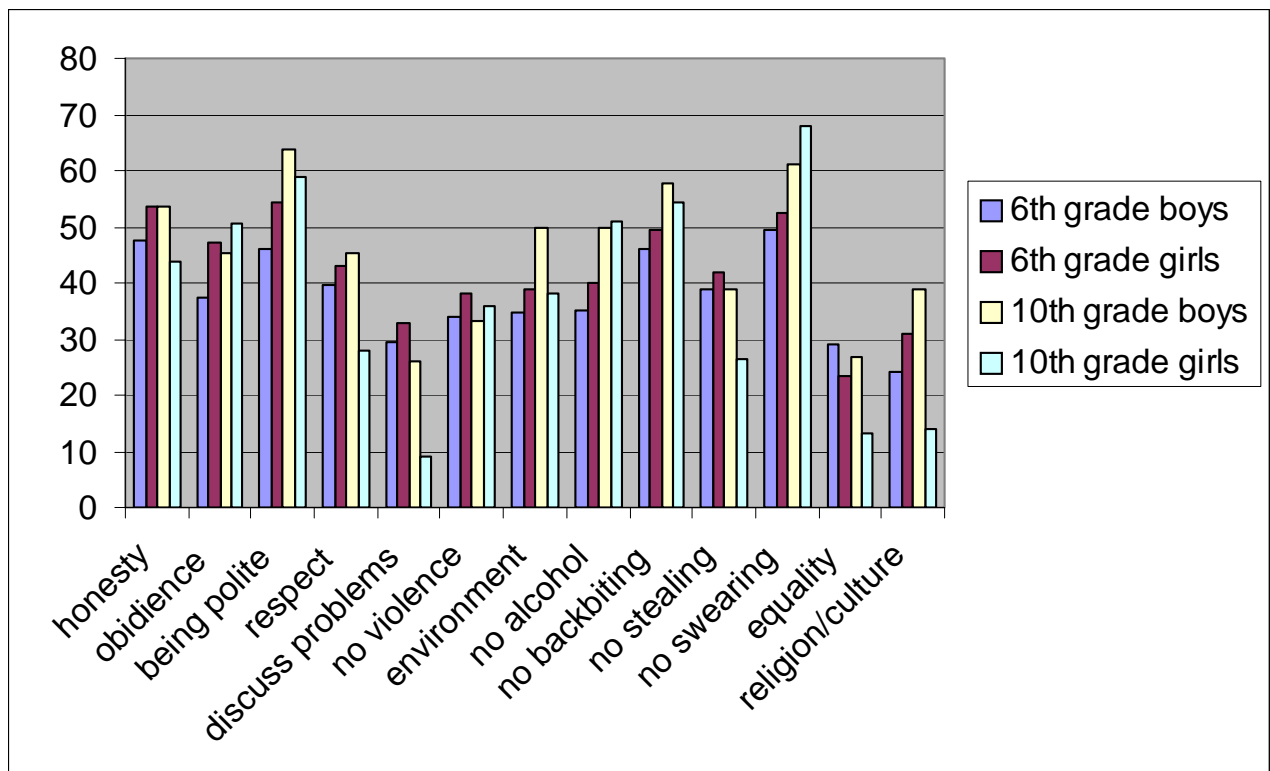


Figure 2. Percent of the pupils having answered that a value is "emphasized less in the program than at school".

We observe pretty much agreement among the pupils that many of the values that most people feel are important in any society, are less emphasized in their favorite program than they are in school. This is the case with values like "not swearing", "speaking politely", "no backbiting or gossip" and "being honest". About 50 % of the 6th graders maintain that these values are less emphasized in their favorite program than they are in school, and for a couple of these values more than 60 % of the 10th graders think they are less emphasized in the program. The only example of a value which they find more emphasized in the program than in school, we find in 10th grade with the value "solving problems by talking". The "don't know" percentages are pretty high, particularly in 6th grade. The highest "don't know" percentages we find for the values "respect other religions and cultures" (about 25 % in 10th grade and about 35 % in 6th grade) and "show responsibility for the environment" (about 25 % in 10th grade and about 27 % in 6th grade). It is more surprising that 20 % in 10th grade and 27 % in 6th grade reply "don't know" to the question about "avoid alcohol/narcotics".

Table 39 shows some differences between girls and boys. As each individual pupil has answered in relation to his or her own favorite program, these differences may be due to different sensitivity to some values, or they may be due to different favorite programs. There were, however, no noteworthy differences between boys and girls when corresponding questions were included in the literacy analysis form (see 4.3). Therefore, it seems to be most reasonable to interpret the differences between boys and girls in table 39 mainly as a result of boys and girls having different favorite programs.¹¹⁰ Among the 6th graders, there are more girls than boys thinking that the value "being honest" is less emphasized in the TV program. Among 10th graders, however, the differences go in the opposite direction. For the rest, there

¹¹⁰ Similar findings in *Young People – New Media*, op.cit., chapter 12, p. 5.

seem to be small differences between boys and girls in the replies from 6th graders, apart from a generally higher percentage of “don’t know” among boys. This might be an indication of boys being less conscious about values than girls.

Among the 10th graders more boys than girls think that values like “show respect to others”, “treat boys and girls the same”, and “respect other religions and cultures” are less emphasized in their favorite program, in addition to the already mentioned “being honest”. This might be interpreted as boys being more conscious about values, but as argued above, it seems more reasonable to interpret this result as a consequence of boys having other favorite programs than girls.

More 10th graders than 6th graders find that their favorite programs place less emphasis on values like “speaking politely”, “not swearing”, and “avoid alcohol/narcotics”. On the other hand, pretty many 10th graders (29 %) think that their favorite program place more emphasis on “solving problems by talking” than school does. Probably these differences have to do with differences in favorite programs between 6th graders and 10th graders.

An identical question has been posed in the teachers’ questionnaire (Q20). In addition, the teachers were asked to what degree they find the values in the media are in accordance with values in school. There is most agreement among the teachers in the case of “old” values like honesty, obedience, politeness, and avoidance of swearing, in addition to relation to alcohol, that these are more emphasized in school (table 40). Hardly any of the teachers think that any of the values mentioned in the questionnaire are more emphasized in the media than in school. However, when it comes to equality of gender, respecting other religions and cultures, and not least showing responsibility for the environment, close to half of the teachers find these values are as much emphasized in the media as in school. As we see, there is pretty much agreement between the teachers and the pupils about which values are given least emphasis in the media, compared to school. However, the teachers are more unanimous in their answers, probably because of being more conscious in regard to values.

Table 40. The teachers' answers to the questions about to what degree various values are emphasized in the visual media and the relation between the values communicated by the media and those values emphasized in school (L97). Percentages. N=106.

	Less emphasized in the media than in school	Emphasized as much in the media as in school	More emphasized in the media than in school	Don't know/not answered	The values in the media are more liberal than those in school	Good accordance between values in the media and in school	The values in the media are more conservative than those in school	Don't know/not answered
Being honest	84,9	5,7	0,9	8,5	85,8	7,5	0,0	6,6
Obeying parents/guardians	83,0	5,7	0,9	10,4	85,8	5,7	0,0	8,5
Speaking politely	90,6	0,9	0,9	7,5	89,6	3,8	0,0	6,6
Showing respect for others	75,5	15,1	0,9	8,5	74,5	17,0	0,0	8,5
Solving problems by talking	71,7	17,9	1,9	8,5	67,9	18,9	0,9	12,3
Not using violence	83,0	10,4	1,9	4,7	79,2	13,9	0,9	6,6
Showing responsibility for the environment	36,8	50,9	2,8	9,4	39,6	48,1	1,9	10,4
Avoiding alcohol/narcotics	80,2	11,3	0,9	7,5	83,0	11,3	0,0	5,6
No backbiting or gossip	70,8	17,9	1,9	9,5	71,7	17,0	0,9	10,4
No stealing	72,6	18,9	0,9	7,6	72,6	18,9	0,0	8,5
No swearing	88,7	2,8	0,9	7,6	89,6	5,7	0,0	4,7
Treating boys and girls equally (equality)	41,5	46,2	2,8	9,4	45,3	43,4	2,8	8,5
Respecting other religions and cultures	39,6	43,4	7,5	9,4	45,3	41,5	3,8	9,4

There seems to be agreement among the teachers, that, in so far as there are differences in values between the media and school, the values in the media are more liberal than those in school. In some cases where the teachers seemingly think that values in the media correspond with values in school, one may question the suitability of the conservative-liberal-dimension.

The parents, too, have replied to questions about values in the media. They were asked to what extent they experience any conflict between the values and norms for behavior that they are trying to establish in the home, and those they feel the media communicate (Q16). In question 23 they are asked to what degree they feel that the children live in a certain tension between upbringing/teaching at home/school and the influence of the media's "parallel school". As shown in table 41, there is fairly good correspondence between the answers to those two questions. About 18 % experience conflict "to a great extent", about 50 % "to some extent", while between 20 % and 27 % answer "to a slight extent". As few as 2-3 % answer

“not at all”. There is some tendency that the number of parents thinking their children live in a field of tension, is less than the number experiencing a conflict themselves. This may be an indication that parents think that the children do not experience the tension that the adults experience.

Table 41. The parents' experience of conflict between values/norms in the home/school and in the media. Percentages. N=301.

Question	To a great extent	To some extent	To a slight extent	Not at all	Not answered
To what extent do you experience any conflict between the values and norms for behavior that you are trying to establish in the home and those that you feel the media communicate?	18,9	52,5	20,9	2,0	5,6
To what extent do you feel your child(ren) lives(live) in a field of tension between upbringing/teaching at home/school and the influence of the media's "parallel school"?	17,6	49,2	26,6	3,0	3,7

Table 42, based on question 15 in the parents' questionnaire, gives more information about in which areas they experience conformity or lack of conformity between values in home and values in the media. Most marks for “do not conform” are given to use of violence, speaking politely, sex and living together, and the core family. The teachers and the pupils have not been given corresponding questions about sex and living together and about the core family, so the groups of persons cannot be directly compared. For the rest, the replies from parents correspond reasonably well with answers from pupils and teachers, not least regarding “speaking politely”. The parents had the opportunity to use more moderate alternatives (“confirm to some extent” and “confirm only slightly”), which, reasonably enough, have got many marks.

Table 42. Parents' answers to question 15: Below is a list of those values/areas that most people feel are important in any society, and which both the home and school emphasize. To what degree do you think the values/areas mentioned below conform to the values/areas that you experience that the media communicate in the following cases? Percentages. N=301.

	Conform entirely	Conform to some extent	Conform only slightly	Do not conform	Don't know*
Being honest	4,0	36,9	38,9	5,6	14,7
Showing consideration	3,0	35,5	38,9	8,3	14,3
Showing concern/solidarity	4,0	41,9	33,6	5,6	14,9
Telling the truth	4,0	40,5	33,9	7,0	14,7
Showing respect for others	3,7	37,2	36,5	9,0	13,6
Not using violence	5,3	16,6	37,5	25,6	15,0
Solving problems by talking	3,3	31,9	41,2	7,0	16,7
Sex and living together	2,0	20,9	40,2	20,9	15,9
Tolerance	2,0	43,9	31,6	6,3	16,3
Speaking politely	3,3	22,9	39,5	20,6	13,6
Being obedient	2,3	31,9	40,9	10,0	15,0
Keeping an agreement	3,7	43,9	29,9	5,6	17,0
No backbiting or gossip	3,3	30,2	40,2	11,6	14,7
No stealing	7,6	37,2	33,2	7,6	14,3
Global solidarity	4,7	40,9	30,2	8,3	16,0
The core family	3,0	28,9	37,2	15,0	16,0

* Includes "not answered".

4.4.3 Who has the greatest power of influencing?

Children and young people are being influenced by, among others, school, the home, friends, and the visual media. Some of the questions in our questionnaires ask about the relative importance of these sources of influence, in relation to formation of attitudes and values in children and young people.

One of these questions was a general question, asking them to rank the sources. The children were asked: "Who do you think has had the most influence on your attitudes to what is right and wrong?" (Q6:41;10:59). The corresponding question to parents and teachers, reads: "What do you believe are the sources of greatest influence in forming the attitudes of children and youth today?" (QT:22;P:17). The various sources should be ranked from 1 for the strongest influence, and so on. Some respondents have just ticked off one or more squares instead of ranking, and a few have given more than one source the same rank.

The distribution of answers within the four groups is shown in table 43ab. From table 43a we see that both the 6th graders and the 10th graders think the home has had the most influence on their attitudes to what is right and wrong. More than two thirds of the 10th graders have the

home in the first place, and 56 % of the 6th graders. Among the 6th graders school is number 2 and friends number 3, while the 10th graders assign less importance to school. Visual media is given as number 4. In both age groups, just above 20 % have the visual media among the three most important sources of influence.

Table 43a. Who do you think has had the most influence on your attitudes to what is right and wrong? (Put 1 for the one that has had the most influence, 2 for the next most and 3 for the third most.) Percentages. 6th grade: N=291. 10th grade: N=212.

	Grade	No. 1	No. 2	No. 3	Mark	Not mentioned
School	6 th	26,1	25,1	15,8	4,8	28,2
	10 th	6,1	27,8	26,4	3,8	35,8
My friends	6 th	10,7	22,0	25,8	3,1	38,5
	10 th	10,3	29,3	25,5	8,0	26,9
My home	6 th	56,0	14,4	7,2	6,9	15,5
	10 th	68,4	10,4	4,3	9,0	8,0
The visual media	6 th	3,5	6,1	11,3	0,3	78,7
	10 th	3,3	7,1	12,8	0,9	75,9
Other	6 th	1,4	0,3	1,7	1,0	95,5
	10 th	1,9	0,0	1,4	0,5	96,2

Table 43b. Teachers' and parents' answers to: What do you believe are the sources of greatest influence in forming the attitudes of children and youth today? (Number at least three, 1 for the strongest, 2 for the next most influential etc.) Percentages. Teachers: N=106. Parents: N=301.

	Group	No. 1	No. 2	No. 3	No. 4	No. 5	Mark	Not mentioned
The media	Teachers	20,8	24,5	19,8	14,2	0,0	5,7	15,1
	Parents	10,6	16,3	28,9	9,0	0,3	4,3	30,6
School	Teachers	4,7	14,1	26,4	31,1	0,9	2,8	19,8
	Parents	4,3	24,9	24,6	10,0	0,0	3,7	32,6
The home	Teachers	41,5	10,4	16,0	11,3	0,0	4,7	16,0
	Parents	56,5	14,0	12,3	1,3	0,0	4,7	11,3
Friends	Teachers	24,5	30,1	12,3	11,3	0,0	7,5	14,2
	Parents	18,3	31,5	20,3	5,3	0,0	3,7	20,9
Other(s)	Teachers	0,0	0,0	0,9	0,0	3,8	2,8	92,5
	Parents	0,3	0,3	2,3	1,0	3,3	0,3	92,4

In the parents group and the teacher group, the majority ranks home as number 1, followed by friends and media. Both parents and teachers rank school as number 4. Adults seem to have less faith in school as a source of influence than the children have, while the adults place more emphasis on the effect of the visual media than the children and young people do. In addition, adults think the friends have greater effect than the children and the young ones themselves do, but this difference is much less than in the case of the media.

It may be a surprise that both the 6th graders and the 10th graders emphasize the influence of homes as much stronger than influence from peers. Nevertheless, they admit that peers play an important role. Table 44 shows their answers to a question about what role their friends play in influencing their views on different aspects (Q6:43;10:62). The wording of the question is similar for both age groups, but the 10th graders were asked about more aspects than the 6th graders.

Table 44. What role do your friends play in influencing your views on ... Percentages. 6th grade: N=291. 10th grade: N=212.

	Grade level	Big role	A certain role	Small role	No role	Don't know
Honesty	6 th	38,1	24,4	13,1	4,1	20,2
	10 th	50,0	31,1	12,7	3,8	2,3
Caring	6 th	37,8	23,0	14,8	5,2	19,2
	10 th	44,3	29,7	18,4	4,7	2,8
Violence	6 th	17,9	9,6	14,8	24,4	33,3
	10 th	26,9	27,4	23,1	12,3	10,4
Peaceful solution of conflicts	6 th	28,2	20,6	10,7	7,2	33,4
	10 th	24,5	31,6	23,6	10,8	9,5
Fair sharing of money and food	6 th	33,7	17,9	9,3	10,0	29,3
	10 th	16,0	26,9	26,4	21,2	9,4
Stealing	6 th	16,8	10,3	11,0	21,6	20,2
	10 th	24,1	21,2	16,0	24,5	14,2
Swearing	6 th	17,5	16,5	16,5	20,3	29,2
	10 th	20,8	21,2	19,8	27,8	10,4
Rules for family life	6 th	25,4	25,1	13,7	8,6	27,2
	10 th	12,7	24,5	30,7	24,1	8,0
Tolerance	10 th	31,1	27,8	19,8	8,0	13,2
Respect for fellow human beings	6 th	33,3	24,7	9,6	5,2	27,1
	10 th	29,7	31,6	17,9	9,0	11,8
Respect for the opposite sex	10 th	37,7	34,9	14,6	7,1	5,7
Sex and living together	10 th	22,2	26,9	25,9	15,6	9,5
Solving conflicts	10 th	40,1	37,7	13,7	2,4	6,1

We notice that the 6th graders have a more extensive use of “don’t know”, which to some degree influences the percentages in the whole table. For most aspects, the 10th graders assign a greater role to the peer group than 6th graders do. Both age groups, however, clearly feel that friends play an important role for their view on values, even if they think the home has had the greatest influence. It is surprising that both age groups assign a greater role to their friends in relation to relatively abstract concepts like honesty and caring, and less when it comes to violence, stealing and swearing.

Parents and teachers have been asked corresponding questions about the role of the peer group in influencing the pupils’ attitudes and ideas (QT:23;P:20). The aspects are slightly differently worded in the questionnaires. The replies from the parents are shown in table 45, and from the teachers in table 46. We notice that the parents have less variation in their answers than both the pupils and the teachers. However, the view of the core family stands out as the aspect which they think is least influenced by the peer group.

Table 45. Parents answers to: What role do you think peers/peer groups play in influencing attitudes among children/youth? Percentages. N=301.

	Big role	A certain role	Small role	No role	Don't know
Being honest	20,9	61,5	9,3	1,0	7,3
Showing consideration	26,2	54,5	11,3	0,0	8,0
Showing concern/solidarity	27,9	53,8	9,3	0,3	8,7
Telling the truth	26,2	49,2	13,3	3,0	7,6
Showing respect for others	25,9	51,8	11,6	3,0	7,6
Not using violence	33,6	45,5	10,0	2,3	8,6
Solving problems by talking	22,3	49,5	15,6	1,7	10,9
Views on sex and living together	24,6	52,2	10,6	1,3	11,3
Tolerance	22,6	54,2	14,0	0,7	8,6
Speaking politely	30,2	47,5	12,3	2,0	7,9
Being obedient	17,3	50,2	21,3	3,0	8,3
Keeping an agreement	21,6	51,5	16,9	2,0	7,9
No backbiting or gossip	32,9	46,8	11,0	1,7	7,6
No stealing	27,2	43,5	17,9	3,7	7,6
Global solidarity	18,3	47,2	22,6	2,7	9,3
Views on the core family	12,3	40,9	31,2	6,3	9,3

Table 46. Teachers answers to: What role do you think peer/peer groups (school, the media, the home) play in influencing attitudes and ideas among the pupils in the following areas? Percentages. N=106.

		Big role	A certain role	Small role	No role	Don't know
Being honest	Peers/peer groups	38,7	51,9	7,5	0,0	1,9
	School	22,6	67,9	8,5	0,0	0,9
	The media	12,3	48,1	31,1	4,7	3,8
	The home	64,2	31,1	1,9	0,0	2,8
Showing consideration	Peers/peer groups	23,6	61,3	12,3	0,0	2,8
	School	24,5	65,1	9,4	0,0	0,9
	The media	4,7	40,6	42,5	6,6	5,6
	The home	64,2	30,2	2,8	0,0	2,8
Solving conflicts	Peers/peer groups	32,1	50,0	15,1	0,0	2,8
	School	34,0	60,4	4,7	0,0	0,9
	The media	13,2	42,5	33,0	5,7	5,6
	The home	43,4	41,5	10,4	0,0	4,7
Sex and living together	Peers/peer groups	53,8	36,8	4,7	0,0	4,7
	School	1,9	39,6	50,9	5,7	1,8
	The media	50,0	39,6	4,7	0,9	4,7
	The home	19,8	54,7	17,0	3,8	4,7
Family life	Peers/peer groups	10,4	51,9	32,1	0,9	4,7
	School	2,8	48,1	43,4	4,7	0,9
	The media	17,0	50,5	25,5	3,8	3,8
	The home	65,1	30,2	1,9	0,0	2,8
Violence	Peers/peer groups	42,5	50,0	3,8	0,0	3,8
	School	11,3	67,0	17,9	0,0	3,7
	The media	51,9	38,7	5,7	0,0	3,8
	The home	34,0	47,2	9,4	2,8	6,6

Tolerance	Peers/peer groups	22,6	59,4	15,1	0,0	2,8
	School	24,5	67,9	6,6	0,0	0,9
	The media	17,9	50,0	23,6	1,9	6,6
	The home	42,5	46,2	3,8	0,0	7,5
Drugs	Peers/peer groups	73,6	22,6	1,9	0,0	1,9
	School	11,3	48,1	36,8	2,8	0,9
	The media	37,7	45,3	8,5	0,9	7,5
	The home	43,4	45,3	4,7	0,9	5,7
Behavior in traffic	Peers/peer groups	42,5	46,2	8,5	0,0	2,8
	School	12,3	50,9	31,1	4,7	0,9
	The media	16,0	39,6	35,8	3,8	4,7
	The home	30,2	50,9	15,1	0,9	2,8
Solidarity	Peers/peer groups	26,4	55,7	15,1	0,0	2,8
	School	17,9	64,2	16,0	0,0	1,9
	The media	6,6	53,8	32,1	1,9	5,7
	The home	34,9	52,8	8,5	0,0	3,7
Telling the truth	Peers/peer groups	31,1	52,8	13,2	0,0	2,8
	School	23,6	58,5	17,0	0,0	0,9
	The media	10,4	35,8	44,3	4,7	4,7
	The home	57,5	37,7	0,9	0,9	2,8
Speaking politely	Peers/peer groups	34,9	40,6	17,9	3,8	2,8
	School	27,4	56,6	13,2	0,0	2,8
	The media	19,8	30,2	35,8	9,4	4,7
	The home	51,9	41,5	2,8	0,9	2,8
Being obedient	Peers/peer groups	22,6	43,4	25,5	4,7	3,8
	School	21,7	59,4	17,9	0,0	0,9
	The media	9,4	28,3	43,4	13,2	5,6
	The home	57,5	35,8	2,8	0,9	2,8
Keeping an agreement	Peers/peer groups	22,6	56,6	16,0	0,9	3,8
	School	23,6	57,5	17,9	0,0	0,9
	The media	7,5	30,2	45,3	12,3	4,7
	The home	54,7	37,7	2,8	0,9	3,7
Showing respect for others	Peers/peer groups	23,6	50,0	18,9	1,9	5,7
	School	24,5	62,3	10,4	0,9	1,9
	The media	10,4	33,0	44,3	7,5	4,7
	The home	50,9	41,5	2,8	1,9	2,8

There is much more variation in the teachers' answers. Close to three quarters of the teachers think the peer group plays an important role in relation to drugs, and more than half assign the peer group an important role in influencing attitudes to sex and living together. On the other hand, just 10 % think the peer group plays an important role regarding attitudes to family life.

The teachers have replied to identical questions regarding the peer group, school, the media, and the home (Q23-26). We notice that teachers assign the biggest role to the home in attitude formation in most areas, but with some exceptions. The exceptions are drugs, sex and living together, behavior in traffic, and violence. As many as 74 % of the teachers think the peer group plays a big role in the case of drugs, while 43 % of the teachers assign a big role to the home in this case. The teachers assess the peer group and the home as the most important sources of influence in the case of behavior in traffic, too, but there is less difference between them in this case. When it comes to sex and living together, and to violence, however, the teachers think the peer group and the media play a bigger role than the authorized sources of influence, the home and school.

Question 61 to the 10th graders and question 21 to the teachers give us more detailed information about the direction of the influence from different sources. In these questions various value statements are presented, concretizing central concepts like honesty, caring, conflict solving and so on (see table 47a-h). Even if both questionnaires have the same concepts and statements, the teachers and the pupils have been given different tasks. The pupils are asked to put numbers to the two statements within each concept which fit best with what they themselves feel is meant by the concept. For *these* statements, they are asked to state which source has had most influence on them. The teachers, on the other hand, are asked to state, for each of the value statements, which of the sources of influence they think give greatest emphasis to such an interpretation of the concept. Both pupils and teachers have been allowed to mark more than one source of inference for each statement, so the sum of the percentages may exceed 100.

As the results are presented in table 47a-h, percentage figures for the teachers' answers are not directly comparable to percentage figures for pupils' answers. The percentages for the pupils reflect *both* how many pupils have chosen that statement as fitting what they feel is meant by the value, and how they assess the importance of the various sources of influence. When the sum of the percentages is low for some statements, the reason is that few pupils have ranked those statements as fitting the meaning of the value, as they see it. For the teachers, on the other hand, the sum of the percentages for each statement should be equal, apart from the variations resulting from variations in "not answered" and in ticking off more than one source of influence. By looking at the relative strength of the sources of influence, however, we may find to what degree the teachers and the pupils seem to agree. In table 47a, for example, we notice that most of the teachers think school is the context giving most emphasis to the various aspects of honesty specified in the questionnaire, regarding home as a good number two. The pupils place less emphasis on school. They regard the home as the most important influencing factor for four of the five statements. When it comes to "not talking behind someone's back", they think they have been most influenced by their friends. That the sum of percentages for this statement is so low, is a consequence of the fact that few pupils gave this statement priority among the statements fitting what they themselves mean by honesty.

Table 47a. Honesty. The pupils' opinions on what sources who have influenced them most in relation to the various statements, and the teachers' opinions on in which context the values are given greatest emphasis Percentages. 10th grade: N=212. Teachers: N=106.

Honesty:		Visual media	School	Home	Friends	Don't know
Always telling the truth	10 th graders	10,8	18,4	63,7	32,5	----
	Teachers	0,9	85,8	72,6	8,5	0,9
Doing right even when nobody sees you	10 th graders	5,7	21,2	49,5	15,6	----
	Teachers	0,0	83,0	58,5	5,7	3,8
Not talking behind someone's back	10 th graders	4,2	17,0	23,6	26,4	----
	Teachers	0,9	73,6	40,6	20,8	7,5
Not taking anything that isn't yours	10 th graders	13,7	24,5	51,4	18,4	----
	Teachers	3,8	74,5	66,0	11,3	6,6
Resisting the temptation to tell a lie	10 th graders	4,7	19,3	34,9	16,0	----
	Teachers	2,8	72,6	50,9	5,7	7,5

As regards caring (table 47b), the most important difference between pupils and teachers is that teachers place most emphasis on school, while most pupils think the influence from the home has been more important than the influence of school. When it comes to "being loyal

and sincere towards a friend”, however, the pupils value friends as the most important source of influence. The teachers, too, think this value is given great emphasis among the friends.

Table 47b. Caring. The pupils’ opinions on what sources who have influenced them most in relation to the various statements, and the teachers’ opinions on in which context the values are given greatest emphasis Percentages. 10th grade: N=212. Teachers: N=106.

Caring:		Visual media	School	Home	Friends	Don’t know
Helping a person in difficulty	10 th graders	19,3	31,6	61,3	29,7	----
	Teachers	15,1	75,5	53,8	16,0	5,7
Showing empathy and solidarity with other people’s situation	10 th graders	7,5	18,9	33,5	14,6	----
	Teachers	21,7	78,3	33,0	11,3	4,7
Not bullying when others bully	10 th graders	8,5	27,8	33,5	16,5	----
	Teachers	7,5	81,1	40,6	9,4	4,7
Not hurting a person physically or mentally	10 th graders	13,2	29,7	49,5	21,7	----
	Teachers	5,7	78,3	55,7	10,4	6,6
Being a loyal and trustworthy friend	10 th graders	10,4	17,5	36,3	49,5	----
	Teachers	4,7	52,8	40,6	50,9	4,7

Among the five statements representing different forms of conflict solving, two statements stand out as getting priority from the pupils (table 47c). Those two are “solving a conflict through dialogue and discussion” and “solving a conflict by admitting what one has done and by apologizing/asking for forgiveness”. In both these cases, most of the pupils emphasize the home as source of influence, while the teachers think school is number one. When it comes to the other statements about conflict solving, which are less often chosen by the pupils, the teacher group and the pupils group seem to agree that the visual media is an important source of influence in relation to solving conflicts with violence or threats of violence and through letting the strongest have their own way. The idea of avoiding confrontation by not saying anything as a way of solving conflicts, seems to be influenced mostly by friends.

Table 47c. Solving a conflict. The pupils’ opinions on what sources who have influenced them most in relation to the various statements, and the teachers’ opinions on in which context the values are given greatest emphasis Percentages. 10th grade: N=212. Teachers: N=106.

Solving a conflict:		Visual media	School	Home	Friends	Don’t know
Solving a conflict with violence or threats of violence	10 th graders	17,9	5,2	5,2	9,0	----
	Teachers	58,5	17,9	6,6	21,7	15,1
Solving a conflict through dialog and discussion	10 th graders	17,5	51,9	60,8	28,8	----
	Teachers	6,6	85,8	39,6	5,7	6,6
Solving a conflict by admitting what one has done and by apologizing/asking for forgiveness	10 th graders	12,3	40,1	64,2	23,6	----
	Teachers	2,8	78,3	50,0	9,4	6,6
Letting the strongest have his/her own way	10 th graders	10,4	3,8	6,1	8,0	----
	Teachers	44,3	7,5	8,5	34,9	19,8
Avoiding confrontation by not saying anything	10 th graders	7,1	7,1	6,6	10,8	----
	Teachers	17,0	17,0	14,2	44,3	25,5

When it comes to sex and living together, we notice from table 47d that the sum of percentages is highest for the statements “my private life that concerns no one else” and

“marriage based on love and being faithful all one’s life”. 44 % of the pupils have chosen “my private life that concerns no one else” as the statement fitting what they mean by sex and living together, while 20 % have ranked “marriage based on love and being faithful all one’s life” as number one. The other three statements get little support from the 10th graders. Home and school are the most important sources influencing the pupils to connect sex and living together with marriage based on love and being faithful all one’s life. However, we notice too interesting differences between the teachers and the pupils as groups. Again, the pupils place less emphasis on school than the teachers do. The pupils spread out their answers more than the teachers do. Some pupils mention friends and the visual media as influencing them to look at sex and living together as marriage based on love and faithfulness. This may be reasonable enough, as different pupils have different significant friends and are influenced by different visual media programs. The teachers emphasize the visual media as a source of influence in relation to the other statements about sex and living together, while the pupils put more emphasis on friends than on the visual media for all statements except those two statements considering sex and living together as entertainment where partners are primarily sex objects, or referring to pornography.

Table 47d. Sex and living together. The pupils’ opinions on what sources who have influenced them most in relation to the various statements, and the teachers’ opinions on in which context the values are given greatest emphasis Percentages. 10th grade: N=212. Teachers: N=106.

Sex and living together		Visual media	School	Home	Friends	Don’t know
Free sexual relationships are an ideal	10 th graders	21,2	9,9	6,6	25,0	----
	Teachers	77,4	2,8	3,8	15,1	13,2
My private affair that nobody can interfere in	10 th graders	15,1	18,9	29,7	36,8	----
	Teachers	33,0	10,4	16,0	25,5	20,8
Marriage that involves both love and being faithful all your life	10 th graders	17,0	22,6	36,3	18,4	----
	Teachers	0,9	57,5	50,9	4,7	18,9
The way it is presented in pornography	10 th graders	9,9	0,9	0,5	8,0	----
	Teachers	67,9	1,9	1,9	19,8	19,8
Entertainment where partners are primarily sex objects	10 th graders	10,4	3,3	1,9	5,7	----
	Teachers	77,4	0,9	0,9	5,7	14,2

We notice from the sums of percentages in table 47e that most pupils view violence as something destroying individuals and society, while a few think it is OK to revenge injustice or use force when an agreement has been broken. The group of teachers and the group of pupils seem to agree that the visual media is the main source of influence when thinking that the use of force is OK, but this view is influenced by friends, too. The teachers seem to emphasize the visual media as the main factor also in relation to the view that it is necessary to defend oneself against personal injustice and to think of violence as ill-treatment in the family at home, while the pupils consider the various sources of influence more equal in this respect. School and the home are important sources of influence in relation to viewing violence as something that destroys individuals and society, but the visual media play a role here, too.

Table 47e. Violence. The pupils' opinions on what sources who have influenced them most in relation to the various statements, and the teachers' opinions on in which context the values are given greatest emphasis Percentages. 10th grade: N=212. Teachers: N=106.

Violence		Visual media	School	Home	Friends	Don't know
Something that destroys individuals and society	10 th graders	39,2	45,3	50,5	23,6	----
	Teachers	29,2	62,3	42,5	9,4	9,4
That it is OK to revenge injustice	10 th graders	13,7	4,2	5,7	8,5	----
	Teachers	58,5	0,9	4,7	32,1	17,0
Mistreatment in family life	10 th graders	24,5	22,2	25,0	10,8	----
	Teachers	45,3	7,5	14,2	3,8	36,8
That it is necessary to defend oneself against personal injustice	10 th graders	16,5	12,3	15,6	14,6	----
	Teachers	44,3	17,9	22,6	28,3	19,8
That it is OK to use force when an agreement has been broken	10 th graders	12,3	4,7	3,8	10,4	----
	Teachers	61,3	1,9	1,9	23,6	24,5

Tolerance is a difficult concept, and it is no surprise that the pupils spread their answers over all five statements presented in the questionnaire (see table 47f). The alternative getting most support from the pupils, is that all human beings, regardless of race and religion, should be regarded and treated as equals. Without regard to which statement they have chosen, they consider school and the home as the most important sources of influence. The teachers regard the visual media as an important source of influence in interpreting tolerance as regarding everything equally right or wrong. They consider school to be by far the most important source of influence in relation to the other four interpretations.

Table 47f. Tolerance. The pupils' opinions on what sources who have influenced them most in relation to the various statements, and the teachers' opinions on in which context the values are given greatest emphasis Percentages. 10th grade: N=212. Teachers: N=106.

Tolerance		Visual media	School	Home	Friends	Don't know
Seeing everything as equally right or wrong	10 th graders	9,4	14,6	18,9	8,5	----
	Teachers	32,1	13,2	9,4	7,4	45,3
Having one's own conviction about religion and politics in peace	10 th graders	7,5	16,5	15,6	7,5	----
	Teachers	14,2	47,2	28,3	10,4	19,8
Having one's own conviction and letting others have the same right	10 th graders	10,4	26,4	30,7	14,6	----
	Teachers	9,4	60,4	24,5	12,3	17,9
That all human beings, regardless of race and religion, are regarded and treated as equals	10 th graders	23,1	41,0	40,1	21,7	----
	Teachers	17,9	75,5	17,9	2,8	8,5
The will to see an issue from different points of view	10 th graders	14,6	25,9	34,0	13,2	----
	Teachers	14,2	72,6	18,9	3,8	15,1

We notice from table 47g that the two statements getting most support in the area of family life, are “marriage that involves both love and being faithful all your life” and “a fellowship in which one can trust each other totally”. Most pupils think the home has influenced them to this point of view, but the teachers emphasize both the home and school. However, the teachers agree with the pupils that the homes influence them to a view of family life as a fellowship that can protect children's needs and rights. The teachers assign more influence to the visual media than the pupils do, when it comes to influencing them to view co-habiting and marriage as equally good, and to view family life as a fellowship with stepfather,

stepmother and half-siblings. However, teachers and pupils agree that some pupils have got this influence from their own home.

Table 47g. Family life. The pupils' opinions on what sources who have influenced them most in relation to the various statements, and the teachers' opinions on in which context the values are given greatest emphasis. Percentages. 10th grade: N=212. Teachers: N=106.

Family life		Visual media	School	Home	Friends	Don't know
Marriage that involves both love and being faithful all your life	10 th graders	17,9	22,6	55,2	15,6	----
	Teachers	1,9	55,7	52,8	7,5	14,2
A fellowship in which one protects the rights and needs of children	10 th graders	13,2	20,3	40,6	11,8	----
	Teachers	8,5	54,7	70,8	4,7	7,5
A fellowship where one can trust each other totally	10 th graders	12,7	18,4	55,7	20,8	----
	Teachers	0,9	54,7	51,9	17,9	13,2
That co-habiting and marriage are equally good	10 th graders	10,8	12,7	17,0	12,7	----
	Teachers	54,7	14,2	31,1	28,3	15,1
A fellowship involving stepfather, stepmother and half-siblings	10 th graders	7,1	4,2	8,0	4,7	----
	Teachers	40,6	12,3	27,4	10,4	29,2

One or two of the statements regarding religion are somewhat abstractly worded, and that may be a reason why few pupils think of religion as an anchoring for one's personal identity (see table 47h). Otherwise, we notice that the pupils consider school to be the most important source of influence in relation to religion, for all the statements except "something that doesn't fit into our modern world". The teachers agree, apart from emphasizing the visual media as the main influencing source both in relation to "something that doesn't fit into our modern world" and "an interpretation of history".

Table 47h. Religion. The pupils' opinions on what sources who have influenced them most in relation to the various statements, and the teachers' opinions on in which context the values are given greatest emphasis Percentages. 10th grade: N=212. Teachers: N=106.

Religion		Visual media	School	Home	Friends	Don't know
A firm foundation for morals and ethics	10 th graders	9,0	30,7	19,3	7,1	----
	Teachers	2,8	75,5	32,1	0,9	12,3
An answer to the meaning of life/ how the world came into being	10 th graders	12,7	34,4	21,7	6,1	----
	Teachers	5,7	63,2	23,6	1,9	20,8
Something that doesn't fit into our modern world	10 th graders	10,8	10,4	7,5	11,3	----
	Teachers	34,0	3,8	1,9	24,5	42,5
An interpretation of history	10 th graders	11,8	35,4	15,6	8,0	37,7
	Teachers	34,9	22,6	2,8	12,3	----
An anchoring for one's personal identity	10 th graders	8,0	19,3	11,3	4,7	----
	Teachers	1,9	49,1	35,8	3,9	28,3

4.4.4 Summary

Most pupils seem to be reasonably aware of the differences in values between what is presented in the visual media and what is emphasized in home and school. As one might expect, the 10th graders have a more clear understanding of it than 6th graders have. The

parents think their children to some degree experience a state of tension between upbringing in home and school, and influence from “the parallel school”.

When it comes to the importance of the various sources of influence, there is a reasonable degree of agreement between children and adults that the home is most important, and has the most influence on attitudes to what is right and wrong. However, the adults assign a greater role to the visual media than the children and young people do themselves. To some extent, this difference may be related to a tendency among the adults to think of the visual media influencing children and youth as a group, while the children themselves experience this influence as an influence from friends rather than from the media.

Table 47a-h show a tendency that the visual media and friends very often are seen as sources of influences to the same statements, while home and school accordingly go together influencing other statements. Home and school have an influence on honesty and caring, and on conflict solving through dialogue and discussion or through admitting having done something wrong and asking for forgiveness. When it comes to two of the statements in relation to honesty and caring, namely “not talking behind someone’s back and being loyal and sincere towards a friend”, the pupils place most emphasis on influence from friends. The visual media is an important source of influence when it comes to solving conflicts through violence and letting the strongest have his/her own way, while friends can influence to avoiding confrontation by not saying anything. When it comes to sex and living together, those who find that “marriage that involves both love and being faithful all your life” is a statement representing what they feel is meant by sex and living together, report of being influenced by home and school. Those who view sex and living together the way it is presented in pornography and as entertainment where the partner is a sex object, think they are influenced by the media. Those who think it is their private affair that nobody can interfere in, or that free sexual relationships are an ideal, say they are mostly influenced by their friends. The teachers, on the other hand, think all the four last-mentioned statements are mostly influenced by the visual media. This may be an indication of a possible indirect effect, where the youngsters experience influence from their friends, while young people as a group may be influenced by the media.

It seems to be a general trend that the pupils put more emphasis on being influenced by friends and less on influence from the visual media than teachers do. Teachers also tend to assign most importance to school while the pupils think influence from their home is more important. This difference may partly have to do with different wording of the questions. The pupils have been asked what sources have been most influencing. The teachers were asked in which context the values were given greatest emphasis. That is, the teachers are asked to focus on those who do the influencing, while the pupils are asked to focus on themselves as receivers of influence.

Another general trend in table 47a-h is the greater variation in the children’s answers than in the teachers’. This may partly be due to the fact that children have different significant friends and different habits of media consumption.

4.5 School and the media

Under this heading we are going to look at results regarding what pupils think about the way the media are used in school, and how their own use of the media influences their school work. The pupils’ answers are compared to information from the teachers.

4.5.1 Use of media in school

The 10th graders were asked whether they learn about the media in school (Q32). 79,2 % say yes, 18,4 % no, and the rest has not answered the question. The 6th graders are asked whether they learn about TV, video, and PC (Q24a). 18,6 % answer “yes” for TV, 17,5 % for video, and 47,1 % for PC.

An additional question (Q6;24b;10:33) is aimed to make clear in which way school does help the pupils to use and know more about the media. The answers to this question, are shown in table 48.

Table 48. ...in which ways does the school help you to learn more about the media? (Check one or more alternatives). Percentages. 6th grade: N=291. 10th grade: N=212.

	6 th	10 th
In discussions about media issues in class	22,3	36,8
In teaching about the use of media, e.g. PC and the Internet	32,3	50,0
By teaching us to evaluate media products and advertisements	7,6	27,4
By the pupils producing simple media products together with the teacher, e.g. film, web-page etc.	8,6	24,5
Other ways	4,1	6,6

Most of the pupils having answered “other ways”, have expressed in their own words varieties of the given alternatives. Some have mentioned the use of PC for example in project work or math games.

One half of the 10th graders say they have been taught about the use of the media, and a little more than one third have had discussions about media issues in class. A little more than one quarter say they have been taught to evaluate media products and advertisements, and close to the same number say they have produced simple media products together with the teacher. The 6th graders have lower percentages on all the alternatives, but the relative strength of the alternatives is practically the same as for the 10th graders.

The pupils are asked what types of media have been used in their class (Q6:30;10:44). The 10th graders were also asked what types of media they would like to see used in the class (Q45). Table 49 shows that TV and video are the types of media most frequently used in the 6th grade. 55 % of the pupils say that TV has been used in their class, and 65 % video. Close to half of the 6th graders say they have used the Internet in the class. In 10th grade more than 90 % have used the Internet in the class, and 85 % video. For TV, the percentage is fairly on the same level as in 6th grade, below 60 %. However, it is worth noticing that more than half of the 10th graders say that a video camera has been used in the class.

Table 49. Check for what type of media have been used in your class. What types of media would you like to see used in class? Percentages. 6th grade: N=291. 10th grade: N=212.

	6 th used	10 th used	10 th would like
TV	55,0	58,6	69,3
Video	64,6	84,9	71,2
Video camera	18,2	53,3	54,2
TV games	7,2	1,4	27,8
Computer games	24,7	11,8	37,7
CD-Rom	26,1	25,5	42,5
PC without the Internet	34,0	38,7	26,9
PC with the Internet	47,8	91,5	80,7

TV games and computer games are more used in the 6th grade than in the 10th grade. Some 10th graders say they wish more use of games in the class.

The 10th graders were also asked in which subjects they have learnt about the use of media (Q34). Table 50 shows the answers, compared with the answers given by the teachers to a question about in which subjects they have included media knowledge (Q9). Most often media knowledge is included in Norwegian and Civics. A greater number of teachers than of pupils report media knowledge included in KRL, and this difference may be due to the pupils being 10th graders while the teachers have answered a generally worded question. The alternative “interdisciplinary projects” was not included in the teachers’ questionnaire. The answer “Other subjects” contains examples which in sum cover most subjects taught in school.

Table 50. In which subjects have you learnt something directly about the use of media at school / In which subjects have you included media knowledge? Percentages. 10th grade: N=212. Teachers: N=106.

	10 th graders	Teachers
Norwegian	58,0	60,4
Civics	37,7	52,8
Art and crafts	7,1	13,2
KRL	6,6	20,8
In interdisciplinary projects	14,6	-----
Other subjects	13,7	17,0

When being asked a general question whether they have taught about media in their teaching (Q8), 79,2 % of the teachers say “yes” and 18,9 % “no”.

The teachers are also asked to mark what media equipment is available at the school for use in the classroom (Q10), and what technical aids they use in preparing their teaching (Q16). The percentages in table 51 should be regarded as underestimates, as “not marked” may mean “not answered” and “not used” or “not available”. A great many teachers report using technical equipment during the preparation, audio media like CD-player and cassette deck, as well as visual media like TV and video, and computer.

Table 51. What media equipment is available at your school for use in the classroom / Which technical aids do you use in preparing your teaching? Percentages. Teachers: N=106.

	Available at school	Use in preparing
PC without the Internet	53,8	35,8
PC with the Internet	95,3	63,2
PC with CD-Rom	88,7	29,2
Video recorder	97,2	50,9
Film projector	52,8	13,2
Camera for video recordings	78,3	5,7
Photography equipment	84,9	-----
Dark room equipment	26,4	-----
Cassette player	96,2	39,6
Television set	97,2	45,3
CD player	98,1	67,0
Animation equipment	6,6	0,9

Both the 10th graders and the teachers were asked whether they think the school makes good enough use of the possibilities offered by TV, video, the Internet, etc. (Q10:42;T:17). Among the 10th graders 22,2 % answer “yes” and 75,5 % “no”, and among the teachers there are 20,8 % “yes” and 77,4 % “no”. It is no surprise that most of them say “no”, as the question must be said to be leading. What is surprising is the similarity in the answers from the teacher group and the 10th graders. The teachers who answered “no”, were asked what they think are the reasons why the school does not exploit well enough the variety offered by the media today (Q18). We see from table 52 that the most frequently used explanations are lack of technical competence in the use of such equipment, lack of knowledge about media products among the staff, and lack of money to buy equipment. Each of these alternatives is marked by about half of the teachers. Pedagogical reasons and reasons related to the subjects have been marked by about 13 %, as has lack of interest in using media equipment in the classroom.

Table 52. What do you think is the reason why the school does not exploit well enough the variety offered by the media today? Percentages. Teachers: N=106.

Lack of money to buy equipment	47,2
Lack of knowledge about using media products among the staff	50,0
Lack of interest in using media equipment in the classroom	12,3
Lack of technical competence in the use of such equipment	52,8
Reasons related to the subjects and pedagogical reasons	13,2
Other	21,7

4.5.2 How does children’s use of media influence their school work?

The 10th graders have been asked whether they think their use of visual media makes them more clever at school (Q51). 47,2 % answer “yes”, 16 % “no”, and the rest “don’t know”.

When asked what type of media they have used most in their schoolwork, the dominating answer is the Internet. TV is number two. This is the case in both age groups (Q6:23;10:31).

Both age groups have been asked how they think their use of media affects their interest for schoolwork (Q6:34;10,52). The question was identically worded in the two questionnaires, but the two age groups were given different alternative answers, as shown in Table 53. 40 %

of the 6th graders have answered “don’t know”. In addition, close to a quarter of them think their use of media has no effect on their schoolwork. The rest is fairly equally distributed on the positive and the negative side. The 10th graders are clearly more positive than negative, even if 14 % think their use of media makes them lose interest in doing homework. As the main positive effect, they mention getting confronted with several points of view on an issue. However, a little more than 30 % of the 10th graders think their use of media does not make any difference in relation to their interest for schoolwork.

Table 53. How do you think your use of the media affects your interest for schoolwork? Percentages. 6th grade: N=291. 10th grade: N=212.

6 th grade		10 th grade	
I become more interested in school	14,1	Doesn't make any difference	31,6
I become less interested in school	16,2	I get several points of view on an issue	44,3
Has no effect either way	23,7	It makes me want to learn more	21,7
Don't know	40,2	I lose interest in doing homework	13,7
Other	0,3	Other	0,9
Not answered	5,5	Not answered	1,4

About 60 % of the 10th graders think that TV, video, Internet etc., at least to some extent steal time they should have spent on doing homework (table 54), against about 30 % in 6th grade (Q6:35;10:53).

Table 54. To what extent does TV, video, the Internet etc. steal time that you ought to spend on doing homework? Percentages. 6th grade: N=291. 10th grade: N=212.

	6 th	10 th
To a great extent	11,3	17,5
To some extent	17,9	42,0
To a slight extent	38,1	25,5
Not at	All 30,2	8,5
Don't know/not answered	2,4	6,6

It is of interest to compare the answers from the pupils with the teachers' view (Q14) of the consequences of pupils' use of media for the school situation. Table 55 shows that it is a widespread opinion among the teachers that some pupils are abnormally tired, due to exaggerated use of the media. On the other hand, about one third of the teachers think the pupils' use of media makes them more motivated for teaching, while just a quarter have the opposite view. A little more than half think the pupils, directly or indirectly, imitate their media idols. However, around half of the teachers have answered these questions with a “don't know” or not answered them at all. This indicates quite a bit of uncertainty associated with the teachers' evaluation of this issue.

Table 55. The teachers' answers to: Check in relation to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements: Percentages. N=106.

	Agree	Disagree	Don't know	Not answered
When pupils are abnormally tired, it is due to exaggerated use of the media	48,1	8,5	39,6	3,8
When pupils are abnormally aggressive, it is due to exaggerated use of the media	22,6	17,0	53,8	6,6
The pupils' use of the media makes them more motivated for teaching	32,1	24,5	38,7	4,7
The pupils' use of the media makes them more impolite in class	19,8	30,2	45,3	4,7
The pupils imitate, directly or indirectly, their media idols	51,9	10,4	34,9	2,8

Table 56 shows that most teachers find that pupils' media experiences provide inspiration and impulses in the teaching situation (Q12). On the other hand, just a minority of the teachers say that pupils' conversations about the media disturb their teaching.

Table 56. The teachers' views of how the pupils' conversations about their use of media and their experiences with the media affect the teaching situation. Percentages. N=106.

	To a large extent	To some extent	Only to a slight extent	Not at all	Not answered
To what extent do you experience that your pupils' conversations about the media disturb your teaching?	0,0	16,0	49,1	31,1	3,8
To what extent do you feel that your pupils' media experiences provide inspiration and impulses in the teaching situation?	8,5	53,8	27,4	6,6	3,8

When asked how they normally tackle direct questions from the pupils about media experiences (Q13), 73,6 % of the teachers answer that they interrupt the planned teaching for a while and allow a discussion. 26,4 % make a note of the question for discussion in a later period, while 16 % say they reject the question and continue teaching as planned. The teachers were allowed to mark more than one alternative, and have to some degree done so, as they, naturally enough, do not tackle this issue in the same way each time.

Summing up, it seems that both teachers and pupils think that the pupils' media experiences as a whole have more positive than negative influence on their schoolwork, even if the teacher group may be more aware of the possible negative consequences. Furthermore, the results show that the school has a distance to go before being capable of really utilizing the media to the benefit of the teaching. The obstacles seem to be partly of economic character, and probably partly on the human side. Nevertheless, most teachers seem to be motivated by these challenges, which will be discussed more in detail in chapter 5.

4.6 Parents' knowledge and experiences about children and the media

We are now going to present the parents' answers to some questions about their own knowledge about children and the media. More than 80 % say they have heard or read about the issue on TV and in articles, and more than 70 % report having heard about it on the radio (table 57). 60 % have attended a parents' meeting on the topic, and about one third of them have listened to a single lecture or read books dealing with the topic. Surprisingly, as many as 10 % say they have attended a seminar on the topic.

Table 57. Where have the parents got any information/knowledge about children and the media? Percentages. N=301.

Question		Yes	No
10	In what type of media have you heard/read anything about the topic of children and the media?		
	Articles	84,1	8,6
	Books	33,6	48,2
	Radio	73,1	16,6
	Television	89,0	6,3
11	Have you ever attended a seminar, a study circle, lecture or parents' meetings on the topic of children and the media?		
	Seminar	10,3	75,7
	Study circle	3,0	79,1
	Single lecture	36,2	54,2
	Parents' meeting	60,5	34,6

28 % of those parents who answered the questionnaire, say they would be interested in attending a parents' course on the issue of children and the media (table 58). If we add those having answered "may be", we reach 70 %. When asked whether they feel they have good enough information/knowledge on the developing role of the media in the society, 38 % say "yes" and 29 % "no". 3 % of the parents have answered with a "no" to both these questions.

Table 58. Do the parents feel they have enough information, and would they mind to attend a parents' course on the issue of "children and the media"? Percentages. N=301.

12	Would it interest you to attend a parents' course on the issue of "children and the media"?	Yes	No	May be
		27,6	25,9	43,2
13	Do you yourself feel that you have good enough information/knowledge on the developing role of the media in society?	Yes	No	Don't know

Question 22 asks the parents how they think they can help children to learn to become critical media users who use the media constructively. Talking and discussing the choice of programs and the programs shown, is the alternative supported by most of the parents (see table 59). 82 % of the parents have marked this alternative, and 74 % have marked setting limits on the amount of time and the choice of programs. We suppose that these two alternatives should be considered together, as talking and discussion probably by most parents are viewed as a means of setting limits. Most of those having marked "allowing them to choose TV programs

themselves”, have marked for talking and setting limits, too. Close to half of the parents think media education at school may help.

Table 59. The parents’ answers to: How can parents/guardians help children to learn to become critical and use the media constructively? Percentages. N=301.

By allowing them to choose TV programs themselves	11,0
By allowing them to buy/rent/copy videos	4,3
By setting limits on the amount of time and the choice of programs	74,4
By talking and discussing the choice of programs and the programs shown	81,7
By offering media education at school	48,2
Other	2,3

When the parents are asked (Q26) whom they expect help from to tackle the challenges of bringing up children in a media society, school is marked by as many as 72 % of the parents (table 60). About 45 % mention parents/neighbors, and about a quarter politicians. The parents seem to have little faith in the church, organizations and media experts in this respect.

Table 60. The parents’ answers to: Who do you expect help from to tackle the challenges of bringing up your child(ren) in a media society? Percentages. N=301.

Politicians	24,6
The school	72,4
The church	13,6
Organizations	14,0
Media experts	11,0
Parents/neighbors	45,8
Congress/the state/the county	15,0
Others	5,6
Nobody	13,3

Table 61 shows that a quarter of the parents have experienced special reactions on the part of their children, which they believe may be related to their use of the media (Q24). Special reactions are in the questionnaire exemplified by nightmare, insomnia, anxiety etc. Close to half of the parents claim that they have not experienced such reactions, while the rest answer “don’t know” or do not answer the question at all.

Table 61. Parents' reports on reactions on the part of the children in relation to their use of the media. Percentages. N=301.

	Yes	No	Don't know/ Difficult to know for sure	Not answered
Have you experienced any special reactions on the part of your child(ren) (nightmare, insomnia, anxiety, etc.) which you believe may be related to their use of the media?	25,6	47,5	24,3	2,7
Have you had any positive experiences on the part of your child(ren) in relation to their use of the media?	62,1	10,0	24,3	3,7

On the other hand, more than 60 % report having had some special positive experiences in relation to their children's use of the media (Q25). 10 % say "no", and the rest say "don't know" or do not answer at all.

When parents explain or expand on their answer, it looks as if the most frequent negative reactions are related to nightmares. Even if nightmares often are related to violent movies, not rarely with a higher age-limit than suits the child, some parents mention nightmares following news programs, for example related to catastrophes and rough weather. One parent mentions nightmare after a nature program where a lion attacked a victim. An interesting single case, worthy of mention, is about a sleeping problem after playing the computer game Sims City, where the house the girl had built for herself and the family was burnt down and one person was lost. However, as one parent writes: not long ago, my daughter had a bad dream in relation to a children's book I read to her. Most parents having commented on their children having experienced special reactions, seem to think of it as rare and not very serious episodes, at the same time as they think parents should try to prevent unnecessary episodes by setting limits on the choice of programs.

The positive experiences are mainly related to the information, knowledge and insight that the children may take in from good TV programs. Some parents mention that they may have interesting talks with the children following TV programs, and a few mention as a positive experience that children react to for example injustice shown in TV programs.

Summing up, there is a clear tendency that most parents think that the positive reactions are of a greater number and should be emphasized more than the few negative reactions.

Nevertheless, most parents think the children, at least to some degree, live in a tension between upbringing and teaching in the home and at school, and the influence of the media's "parallel school".

4.7 Summary and discussion

We now end chapter 4 with a summary and discussion of the results presented. The summary leads up to some conclusions regarding the issue of children being in a "crossfire" between the intentional and the "parallel school". In addition, this summary is part of the basis of the next chapter, addressing the challenges represented by the "parallel school" for pedagogical research and educational practice.

First of all, we want to remind the reader that the results stem from seven municipalities in Møre og Romsdal, and should not be automatically be transferred to other regions. The general validity issues, including issues of transferability, were discussed in chapter 2.2.5.

4.7.1 A brief summary of results

The results show that the visual media play an important role in the lives of children and young people. Much time is spent on the visual media. Our research does not give an estimate of the total amount of time spent on the visual media during an ordinary day, but the answers given to our questions indicate that they use visual media about to the same extent as other Norwegian children and young people do. From our data we know that 40 % of the 10th graders in our sample rent a video film once a week or more often than that, boys more often than girls. Children at this age usually watch the rented video films with their friends, not with adults. A little more than 20 % of the 6th graders say they rent a video film at least once a month.

Boys more often than girls have media equipment in their own room, too. More than one third of the 6th grade boys have TV in their own room, and nearly half of the 10th grade boys.

The Internet and video may be used in the public library. Less than one third of the pupils have used the Internet in the library. Some 6th graders rent a video there occasionally, but scarcely any 10th graders do. The library is used primarily for books, and a little more by the 6th graders than by the 10th graders.

When renting a video film, both genders show great interest in comedies. The boys, however, are even more keen on renting action films, and in 10th grade a great many girls, too, rent action films. Girls are more interested in romantic movies than boys are, while boys are more interested in science fiction. Cartoons are rented by some 6th graders, but seldom by 10th graders. In 10th grade 13 % of the boys report renting sex films, as against 3 % of the girls.

Comedies/comedy series/soaps is the most popular genre on TV, but action films get a high score, too, in both genders. News programs, documentaries, debate programs, interest far fewer children than series and films do, though some boys are interested in sport. Cartoons are a popular genre among 6th graders.

Children and young people seek entertainment and excitement when they watch TV or other media, just a few give priority to seeking knowledge and information. Nevertheless, most 10th graders think they enhance their knowledge and insight through their use of the visual media and particularly through the Internet.

When asked to state what TV program or series they personally like best, most 6th graders chose *Hotel Caesar*, while *Friends* was most popular among 10th graders. They think these program series are made to give them fun, but some of them think they are made also with the intention of teaching them something about adult life.

After watching an episode of the most popular series, the pupils filled in a pre-prepared literacy analysis form. The questions here were constructed to map in some detail how they experience the program. Most of the 6th graders think the program is made primarily for the age group 13-15 years of age, which is reasonably correct. A quarter of the boys, however, think it is intended for the children in 8-12 years of age, too. Most of the children think the program is exciting. A few of them may occasionally get angry, depressed or frightened.

The children seem to be aware that the values presented in these series differ from the values emphasized in school. About one third of the 6th graders say they wished that people would talk to each other in a different way and solve problems differently, and use less alcohol. One

may wonder to what extent those answers reflect the children's own thoughts. They may possibly be influenced by what they think they should answer, or perhaps by knowing that some changes in the program would make it easier for them to be allowed to see the program at home. However, when they are asked what changes they want for the program, most of them want more humor and excitement.

The 10th graders seem to be more satisfied with *Friends* than the 6th graders are with *Hotel Caesar*. They are aware of a difference in emphasis on values compared to what they meet in school, but they find such a difference OK and do not wish special changes in the program. If so, they want more humor and excitement. However, a few of the 10th graders say they wish that the persons in *Friends* solved problems in another way, talked differently to each other, and that the program was less dominated by the use of alcohol.

The children and young people are aware that the visual media can influence them both positively and negatively, but they no doubt think the influence is mainly positive. A positive influence, mentioned by some parents too, is that the visual media may give them more compassion for people who are suffering. Some children think that the use of alcohol and narcotics in visual media will influence them to use less drugs in the future, but most 10th graders and many 6th graders too, think their attitude to drugs will not be influenced by the visual media.

Most children, both 6th graders and 10th graders, say that the home has had the most influence on their attitudes to what is right and wrong. A number of 6th graders think school has played a major role, too. In the interview, one 10th grade pupil uses these words:

If I should listen to wisdom, I do not want to listen to the media. Then I shall listen to those who have taken care of me, and who have taught me things about the world.

Most of the adults agree that the home plays a major role in attitude formation. However, both parents and teachers seem to attribute a more important role to friends and the visual media in attitude formation in children than the children themselves do. Based on answers from the teachers, it seems that adults believe that the peer group plays an important role for the young people's view of drugs, sex and living together, and violence.

The 10th graders were asked what they feel is meant by concepts like honesty, caring, tolerance, and their view of sex and living together, family life, conflict solving and violence. They give very different answers. Those expressing traditional values concerning such issues, think they have been mainly influenced by parents and school, while those maintaining more liberal views refer to influence from friends and the visual media. While the pupils seem to emphasize influence from friends more than influence from the visual media, teachers tend to emphasize the visual media more than the peer group. This discrepancy may indicate that the teachers believe that the children and teen-agers as a group are influenced by the visual media, while the individual young one experiences the influence as coming from friends, without consciously being aware of the possibility of being indirectly influenced by the media.

Most 10th graders report that the media has both a positive and a negative effect on their self-esteem. About 10 % of them say that the media has a negative influence on their self-esteem. During interviews some of them connect the negative influence to the fact that the media show perfect bodies, and their own bodies are not perfect. Even if this problem bothers just a few of the 10th graders, the interview material indicates that it may be serious enough for those concerned.

Most children discuss their use of the media with parents and with friends. Nevertheless, it is worth noticing that many of them, especially among the 10th graders, never discuss with their

parents their use of video, computer games and TV-games. Most children say they experience discussions with their parents about their use of the media as positive. Most of them say that their parents sometimes interfere in their use of the media at home. The pupils tend to feel that their parents are mostly concerned about the possible effect of their use of the media on their homework or their sleep. However, many parents mention also the content of the programs as a cause of conflicts in the home.

The 10th graders tend to admit that the visual media steal time that they ought to spend on doing homework. In addition, many teachers think some pupils are sleepy at school, because of too much use of the media. However, most teachers find that the pupils' use of the visual media gives inspiration and positive impulses to school work. The parents, too, have noticed positive experiences in connection with the children's use of the media, even if some of them also have experienced reactions like nightmare, anxiety etc. which they believe are connected to the use of the media.

4.7.2 Do the children and young people feel they are in a “crossfire” between the intentional school/upbringing and the “parallel school” of the media- and computer industry?

Naturally, such a question cannot be answered with a yes or no. On the one hand, the values and attitudes the children and young people encounter in the most popular products of the “parallel school” are clearly different from the values and attitudes passed on to them in school. This is shown in the analysis made in chapter 3.5 to be the case for the two most popular TV series in these age groups, and results presented in chapter 4.2 indicate that we probably would have found at least equally as much difference if we had been able to analyze more of their favorite programs.

The children and young people seem to be reasonably aware of this difference. But how do they react to this situation?

We have seen that most 10th graders seemed to be comfortable with the difference in values and morals between school and *Friends*. In 4.3.2 we quoted a couple of them, maintaining that it is impossible to contrast a TV program with school education. The teaching is intended to give knowledge and ethical reflection, but the TV program is produced mainly for entertainment. What has this to do with morals? As the quantitative results show that most 10th graders have few wishes for changes in the program, except for even more humor and entertainment, there is reason to believe that this age group feels satisfied with the value differences between school and the media world. There seems to be somewhat less satisfaction with the situation among the 6th graders, but a probable reason for this may be that some of them are not allowed to see the programs they want to see, because of these value differences. But these words said in the interview by a 6th grade boy, illustrate that the children may feel the situation to be difficult:

The difference is clear. For many years we have been taught that certain things are right and other things are wrong. Then we get confused seeing programs where adult persons are doing the opposite of what we have been taught to be right.

The older children seem to maintain that they are able to distinguish between film and real life. A 10th grader says:

Yes, there exists a tension between the values in school and the values in the media. But I believe young people are able to discover the difference between these two sets of values.

They seem to think it is OK that the media world presents other values than school and the homes do, because a film is a film. On the other hand, they see that it can go too far. A couple of quotations from the interviews may illustrate this. A tenth grade boy says:

I look at a film as a film. If someone is killed it does not affect me so much, it is just a film. However, it depends on how it is done. If it is a horror film where a person's body is cut into small pieces, that I do not enjoy. From time to time it is fun to watch a quiet film with a happy end. I really enjoy watching comedies.

And a 10th grade girl reflects:

There are programs that are so grotesque that some people, children and young people, ought not to watch it. The parents must set a limit. ... I must admit, however, that my parents refuse to let me see "Big Brother", but I'm always able to look at the program in one way or another.

Some of the reflections they give in the interviews indicate that the children and young people think of being influenced by the media as a direct influence to practice what they have seen. The 10th grade girl just cited, shares her views in this way:

I must admit that I look at series with killings. This does not mean that I am influenced by what I see to the extent that I get a desire to do the same as they do on TV. But when I sit down and look at a program then I observe what happens, but when the program is over I'm back to the real world. Then I continue doing what I used to do. ... It is just TV. TV is TV, it is not reality, always.

And a 6th grade boy says about what feelings he gets when watching serious conflicts on TV:

I feel that I should not try do to the same, or if it is killing involved, that I should not kill, even if I face a similar conflict.

Even if the children and young people seem to be aware of the values in the media being different from values in school and in their home, they do not seem to be concerned about possible more subtle influences which concern some adults. In chapter 4.4 we quoted a mother, being concerned about young people being "bombarded about the importance of being good-looking and that money and material things are important". Maybe a 10th grade girl shows some awareness of the possible more subtle effects of the amount of influence, when she puts it in this way:

I react when I see serious conflicts leading to killing. I do not like it and I think there are too many programs with violent content. In most series there are killings. It might have been possible to produce series without such incidents.

However, let us remember that our findings show that the influence of the home is stronger than the influence of the media. Then there is reason to believe that there may be strong interaction effects between the home and the media. That means that how the children and young people are influenced by the media, depends on the influence they encounter in the home. Another factor, which also may be related to the home situation, is the closeness that the children feel to the situation they watch.

In an interview with a father, we referred some news from an English media researcher and practitioner. He maintained that the most violent and shocking programs children can see are conflicts in family settings.¹¹¹ We asked the father if he agreed or disagreed with this opinion:

¹¹¹ Taped interview with director Agnellus Andrews, at the Catholic Radio and Television Center, London, 1976.

I believe he is right and I completely agree with this observation. The child gets a closeness to such a situation that is much closer than the shooting and general violence.

Approaching a conclusion to the issue of the child being in a “crossfire”, we find that the children on their part admit that there is a difference between the values taught in school and the values they encounter in the media, but there are few signals indicating that the children themselves experience a high degree of tension or a feeling of living in a “crossfire”. This may partly be due to not being aware of how they are being influenced. Their general contentions are not always logically followed up in their individual statements related to specific issues, for example concerning being influenced by commercials. Another reason is the ability most of them probably have to distinguish between film and games on the one hand, and reality on the other. Referring to what was found in chapter 4.3.2 about *Friends*, the young people may consider the difference as a part of the more general difference between adult values and the values of the youth. The fact that the young people feel influenced by their friends, while adults think they are influenced by the media (see chapter 4.4.3), indicates that they take little notice of the possible indirect and subtle influence from the media world.

From an adult perspective, it may look somewhat different. Teachers and parents who want their children and pupils to develop other values than those shown *in a great part of* the visual media, seem to feel a higher degree of tension than the children do. Naturally, there are variations within the group of teachers and parents. One male teacher expresses his view very clearly, saying:

It truly is a crossfire. I do not doubt that at all. Not just is there a crossfire, but there are some basic attitudes and values on a direct collision course. Looking at L-97 and the directives we have for teaching in the public school, then I believe in the values presented there. These values are very closely tied to my own conviction about basic values. When I look at the collision and crossfire points in some of the presentations in the media, then I do not doubt where my allegiance lies and what values I want to fight for.

Our findings demonstrate that the children are quite aware of the difference between values in the media and values in school and home, but they feel able to handle this situation. Therefore they do not feel this situation to be a crossfire. Being in this dual influence is experienced as a more or less normal interaction for those who are growing up in a media-dominated society.

Chapter 5:

Discussions of findings and challenges

5.1 Value formation, building and sustaining a basis for relationships and attitudes

Value formation is for all generations a key aspect in the education and upbringing of children. Our research has had the value aspect as its focusing point. We have considered the particular problems involved in value formation in a situation where the children are influenced from a dual set of value impulses, from intentional teaching and from media presentations. How do the children experience interacting with these two set of value impulses? To obtain an adult perspective on the issues being discussed with the children, we have involved both parents and teachers.

5.1.1 Value formation in a dual set of value impulses

Our findings show that both children, parents and teachers maintain that there is a difference between the values found in L97 and the values encountered in media productions.

As researchers we base our conclusions on an analysis of L97 as a printed document, and on theoretical reflections on media ethics as far as values in the media are concerned. We also base our conclusions on a media literacy analysis of two TV-episodes from the TV series ranked as the children's most popular programs, *Hotel Caesar* for the 6th graders and *Friends* for the 10th graders.

The children base their cognitive reflections and emotional reactions on impressions received of L97 values in classroom teachings, their own viewing of media products, and discussing media productions at home, with peers and at school.

The teachers base their comparison of the two value universes partly on theoretical reflections about L97, and further on their own viewing of media products. But their considerations are also based on what they consider to be media-related influence of observed behavior and attitudes of pupils in classroom situations. Some teachers maintain that they observe behavior patterns, use of language and attitudes which, in their opinion, quite obviously stem from the children's use of the media.

The parents seem to base their reflections more on a general conviction of what is an acceptable moral code, than on a direct reference to L97. Some were aware of the debate around L97 as a suitable teaching document on ethics for all. Several parents in our study have read books on the media, and some have participated in seminars on the media. We registered a high awareness among parents about teaching their children responsible viewing habits, but several parents felt that they did not succeed in their endeavor. The information given to us by the children, shows a high ingenuity at being able to see what they really want to see. This is a fact faced by many parents who feel uncomfortable about this situation.

Many children maintain that they are able to cope with the situation quite comfortably, being able to see the difference between these two sets of values. Parents and teachers are more directly concerned about the influence of the media on the children, not least the influence from advertising.

Looking at our findings there seems to be an agreement among all involved that there is a difference between the values in L97 and the values encountered in media productions.

Everyone participating in the research project is of the opinion that some media productions are of an excellent quality, including the ethical standard. This means that the media are instruments that can be used in a positive or a negative way. A commercialized media industry, however, is often tempted to make programs that sell, even if this might imply compromising ethical standards and the general quality of production.

L97 strongly emphasizes that the ultimate goal of public school teaching is to make the pupils able to function with integrity and solidarity in a democratic society. A media researcher in the communication department at the University of Navarra, wonders whether the media do not also have a responsibility to educate for democratic living? Is it right that this seems to be left exclusively to school and to the homes?¹¹²

The basis for the views voiced by the children, the parents and the teachers on the media is mostly founded on general knowledge and subjective reflections. Therefore conclusions voiced very strongly in the questionnaires sometimes were moderated and even changed during the in-depth interviews, simply because the conclusions were based on too limited factual knowledge to make a systematic assessment of the issues considered. There surely is a clear need for more education about the media for children at all levels, and for teachers and parents. We have also observed much general insecurity in both children and adults in their encounter with the media. This is particularly the case with regard to the value aspect.

5.1.2 The value issue in post World War 2 public debate and social research

The entire period after World War 2 has seen value issues among the top topics in public debate and social research. The solid preparation for the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, this universal declaration of values that was adopted by the United Nations' General Assembly on December 10, 1948, initiated, and laid the foundation for, a continuous debate and reflection on values that is still going on.¹¹³

The second part of the twentieth century marks the end of colonialism, and the start of systematic aid to poorer and less developed countries in the Third World areas. This took place in the context of the youth revolt of 1968, and in the Marxist fight to replace Western democratic ideas with a Marxist ideology in the nations of the world. The "new French philosophers" started to pose critical questions and allegations about the role of Marxism.¹¹⁴

In the context of UNESCO there was a heated debate on the role of mass communication in society.¹¹⁵ The Marxist and the Third world countries contended that the Western understanding of freedom of expression was a pretext for neo-colonialism and commercial exploitation. In later years pollution of the environment has been much in focus. All the examples mentioned here are basically value issues. They are about how to create a just distribution of wealth within a given society and among the nations of the world, and how to create societies where people can feel personally secure and socially well adjusted.

A key actor, and a key factor in the postwar value debate, has been the ever-growing media industry. What is and what ought to be the role of mass communication in human societies?

The media's operations in societies are something that can be observed and mapped down descriptively. But the influence of the media industry on society moves us from descriptive

¹¹² Francisco J. Perez-Latre: Citizenship, Civic Education and Communication Studies. Unprinted paper. University of Navarra, Spain, 2002.

¹¹³ Asbjørn Eide et al. (eds.): The Universal Declaration of Human Rights: A Commentary, op.cit.

¹¹⁴ Tore Stubberud: Anti-Marx. Om "de nye filosofer" og oss selv. Oslo: Dreyers forlag, 1978.

¹¹⁵ Sean MacBride: Many Voices, One World. The MacBride Report. Paris, London and New York: International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems, UNESCO, 1984.

observation into the field of values and ethics. Our research has concentrated on a limited section of the media in society value debate, the relationship between intentional value teaching of children in the Norwegian public school and the informal value education coming to the children through the various media products. In our research we have primarily tried to elicit the feelings and reflections of children in grades 6 and 10 in facing the dual value impulses from intentional teaching and from informal education about values encountered in different types of media presentations. Our project therefore is a part of the ongoing discussion on values in society.

5.1.3 Establishing relationships through trustworthy information

Our findings show that the main source for being taught what is right and wrong is the home. Some say that school was their main source for finding out what is right and wrong. But the home certainly has the top score when it comes to teaching right/wrong attitudes. How shall we explain this?

An older media effect theory, the two steps theory, contends that persons who are uncertain about the reliability of information received, consult a knowledgeable person whom they trust before accepting or rejecting something as truthful or wrong information. Another explanation is that young people feel so generally insecure with regard to values in the media that they seek advice in an environment where they trust the adults. Their homes seem to be such a haven of trust for most of the pupils studied, for some the haven of trust seems to be the school. Children approaching their teens, or who are in the teenage period, are known for being very critical towards parents and other adult guardians. But behind the critical words and loud outbursts, lies, most often, a basic trust in the adults of their close environment. If individuals of the coming generation seem to have a distrust in the truthfulness of what is communicated to them through media productions, then this is ultimately a threat to the very foundation of democracy. Such a foundation is information that can be trusted as an honest transparent attempt to be accurate in the description of facts or statements.

A Swedish scholar on Greek culture, Hans Furuhaugen, in a lecture reflected on the reasons for the downfall of the ancient Greek democracy. He maintained that the manipulative use of public professional communication by the sophists, for which they were paid, perverted and degraded public communication into a superficially and purposely slanted debate on any issue. The net result was that in the course of time no one any longer dared to believe what was said and debated in public. This created a confusion of minds and a serious breakdown of relationships. The absence of a trustworthy public dialogue, meant that the foundation for the ancient Greek democracy eroded. Furuhaugen concluded by saying:

I hope we have learned our lesson from this historic incident, so that misuse of public communication not once more shall erode the foundation of democracy. Democracy needs a public dialogue that can be trusted, if democracy shall function in a proper way.¹¹⁶

Distrust in public communication is by Furuhaugen considered as something very dangerous also for modern democracies. If there is a distrust by pupils of the truthfulness of media messages, this should be a matter of serious concern. Young persons want to be taken seriously as dialogue partners in public communication.

¹¹⁶ Gudmund Gjelsten: Møte eller manipulasjon. Om etikk i massemedia, op.cit. p. 102.

5.1.4 Basic human rights, L97 and the tolerance issue

Among the issues to be considered on the basis of our findings, are in particular values and norms regarding relationships, attitudes, tolerance and problem-solving.

Discussing the value universe of L97, we found that the problem areas listed above are key issues in the compulsory teaching about ethics and morals in the Norwegian public school. Why are these issues so important in personal and social ethical reflections? Simply because persons, living conditions, cultural and religious traditions, political ideologies etc. are different. For this very reason we have to learn to live with these differences. Discussing legislation from a theoretical perspective is pertinent when reflecting on the lawgiving process in a world with all kinds of differences.

The Dutch philosopher Hugo Grotius maintained that there are three kinds of laws. First, the laws found in the religions of the world. Second, the positivistic legislation, which means the laws of a given country. Third, the natural law including basic human rights, independent of religious or secular worldviews.¹¹⁷

Grotius felt that difference required some respect for difference, and a willingness to face the practical implications of difference. He pointed out that respect for religious or other worldview convictions must be a part of a sound positivistic legislation. But he also maintained that there are some common human rights that must be upheld and protected through what he labeled natural law. The natural law tradition lies behind The UN Declaration on Human Rights. This Declaration and later Conventions clearly state the rights of individuals and families to have religious and other convictions, and to tell others about these. Religious laws or secular worldviews shall not, however, curtail individual freedom of conviction.

Not everyone accepts the natural law basis for human rights. We see this in for example in dictatorships of various kinds, but also in Western democracies when tolerance is interpreted to mean a relativistic attitude towards having convictions. In an age when difference is something that we face all the time, then it is useful to reflect on the three traditions of lawgiving, and the danger involved in mixing for example religious laws into positivistic lawgiving in a way that violates the human rights principles of natural law.

L97 has a value profile that gives individuals the right to be different and to be treated with respect by fellow pupils taught to show respect towards difference. The question arises as to whether this attitude is an attitude which "is simply a resigned acceptance of difference for the sake of peace".¹¹⁸

Once again we quote Walzer's definition:

*My subject is toleration-, perhaps better, the peaceful coexistence of groups of people with different histories, cultures, and identities, which is what toleration makes possible.*¹¹⁹

It is, however, a long way from "a resigned acceptance" toleration to an attitude of supporting otherness as an enriching element in our common humanity. This does not involve a mixing of convictions, but a mature encounter in a respectful dialogue. This is toleration ripened into tolerance. Toleration is necessary in a world of many differences. Tolerance is an attitude of

¹¹⁷ Hugo Grotius in Henrik Thomsen: *Hvem tænkte hvad? Filosofiens hvem-hvad-hvor*. København: Politikens Forlag, 1971, p. 238.

¹¹⁸ Michael Walzer: *On Toleration*, op.cit. p. 10.

¹¹⁹ Ibid. p. 2.

minds that grows slowly as the fruit of mutual respect and trust through words and actions over time.

Where humans live in communities, problems and conflicts arise. How should conflicts be solved? We find it useful to have this general and global perspective as a background when turning to an assessment of national perspectives and our local findings.

L97 stresses the uniqueness of every human being and that one should help those who are treated in an unjust and unfair way. This involves solving problems in a peaceful way through talking and discussing the issue.

How do the children react to a media industry which is full of programs where violent solutions of conflicts abound? Some few children admit to being influenced to reflect on using violence as a means of problem-solving. Most pupils, however, take a clear stand against violence as problem-solving, c.f. chapter 4.

5.2 Our empirical findings and some other newer research on children and the media

In our research we have been focusing on two major institutions as agents of influence in our society, the public school system and the mass media industry. We have studied the value profile found in L97 as a normative value document with legally binding directives for the teaching of values in the Norwegian public school. We have also reflected on the open value profile characterizing media products. Throughout this research we have been aiming at uncovering the thoughts and feelings of the children interacting with the intentional value teaching at school and home, and the informal value education encountered in mass media productions. The empirical data presented and analyzed in chapter 4 consist of the views and reflections of children, and, as an adult perspective, some views and reflections coming from teachers and parents in the immediate environment of the children being studied. With regard to the actual findings we will refer to chapter 4 as a whole and in particular section 4.7.

Now we shall take a brief look at some newer research data on children and the media, and see if the trends in our findings are fairly similar or very different from other research data. Our particular value orientation on the interaction of children between intentional value teaching and functional value education through the media, represents a concentration on a research aspect that is very little directly focused on generally when discussing children and the media. But the value issue is clearly a part of the perspective in several newer studies on children and the media. This is for example the case in the comprehensive study, *The European comparative project on "Children, Young People and the Changing Media Environment"* covering 12 countries.¹²⁰ Livingstone in a book published in 1990 and completely revised in the second edition in 1998, discusses the understanding of media messages and their consequences for everyday lifestyle practices. This certainly is a value issue approach. In the preface to the second edition she writes:

...I still believe that neither social psychology nor media studies has sufficiently faced the problematics which I address in this book, namely how the study of the meaning making practices of audiences can be put together with the study of the meaning making practices of people in their everyday lives. For their construction of everyday

¹²⁰ Livingstone and Bovill: *Young People – New Media*. op.cit., Appendix 1.1, pp.1-2. 5000 children and young people participated in this research being coordinated by Sonia at LSE, London.

*meanings occurs within a fundamentally mediated context, and inevitably, it is from within this context of everyday activities that people view television.*¹²¹

Livingstone here stresses the need for audience research concerned both with the audience interpretation of representations in the media, and the mediation of media messages as effects for people's everyday practices.

In a book published in 2002, Livingstone discusses more directly how we might help children and young people to use the media in a constructive way. She thinks there should be a place for learning through fun, applying the computer/TV games models for teaching. Further, she maintains that one should be more concerned with the tension between commercialization and the public service perspective of mass communication.¹²²

David Buckingham in a recent book focuses on childhood in the twenty-first century. He wonders whether children's growing access to "adult" media will help abolish the distinction between childhood and adulthood? He points out that there seems to be two opposing extremes with regard to this issue. There are critics who hold the media responsible for "the death of childhood", while others look to the media – and particularly computers – as a means of children's liberation. He concludes his book in this way:

*We cannot return children to the secret garden of childhood, or find the magic key that will keep them forever locked within its walls. Children are escaping into the wider adult world – a world of dangers and opportunities, in which the electronic media are playing an ever more important role. The age in which we could hope to protect children from that world is passing. We must have the courage to prepare them to deal with it, to understand it, and to become active participants in their own right.*¹²³

The books just referred to and others discussing children and the media, all seem to agree that here we encounter challenges that must be urgently dealt with. We cannot stop the world, and return to the more secure patterns of yesterday. They all also seem to agree that the strategy to be followed, should involve more research, education about the media for children, teachers and parents. However, views differ as to what this involves with regard to the practical implementation of research and educational aims.

We shall now very briefly discuss some specific findings in our research in the context of the values in L97.

5.2.1 The role of the media as a source of entertainment and excitement

For most children everyday life seems to be full of duties – school attendance, homework, helping at home and participation in various spare-time activities. For some children the "calendar" is so full that it seems to create certain stress symptoms. Therefore the children welcome TV-viewing and use of other media devices as a much needed relaxation.

It is interesting to observe that the Internet has been widely marketed as "a source of knowledge", but the Internet is an important source of entertainment as well, c.f. table for Q60/10th grade. Recent information from Statistics Norway shows a marked increase in the use of a PC with the Internet in the total population, with an increase from 31 to 36 % from 2002 to 2003. It is also interesting to observe from Statistics Norway that 100 % of young

¹²¹ Sonia Livingstone: *Making Sense of Television. The Psychology of Audience Interpretation*. London and New York: Routledge, 1998, p. x.

¹²² Sonia Livingstone: *Young People and New Media. Childhood and the Changing Media Environment*. London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2002, pp. 242-243.

¹²³ David Buckingham: *After the Death of Childhood. Growing Up in the Age of Electronic Media*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000, pp. 190 and 207.

people between the ages of 16-19 have their own mobile telephone.¹²⁴ Most children consider their use of the media, on the whole, as something positive, while also admitting that there are negative aspects in their use of the media.

Looking for the adult perspective in this research, the parents also view children's use of the media as mainly positive. But they, nevertheless, experience some degree of conflict between values and norms they are trying to establish in the home, and the values communicated in the media.

Most teachers find that the pupils' use of visual media gives inspiration and positive impulses to school work, even if some pupils, for example, may be sleepy at school because of too much exposure to the media.

An attempt to assess the values and effects of children's use of visual media is a rather complex procedure. Children enjoy using media products, adults see both positive and negative elements in children's use of the media.

In this interaction between these two sets of value impulses, L97 represents a normative document containing clearly defined values. As researchers we would maintain that our data indicate that the tension between these two value profiles in the lives of the children is more complex than they themselves seem to admit. This is an aspect that needs to be very carefully discussed when considering education about the media.

5.2.2 The visual media and young people's self-esteem

About 10 % of the 10th graders say that the media has a negative effect on their self-image. At least some of the 15-16 year-old pupils connect this negative influence to the fact that the media show an abundance of perfect bodies while their own bodies are not so perfect. It is also pointed out that while American movies are populated by slim and very fit persons, the pupils know from other information sources that the USA have a very large percentage of overweight people.

To see more or less only slim and fit persons in movies might be at least part of the reason for the increase in eating disorders, a growing interest in buying cosmetic operations etc.

A person's interaction with family, the peer-group, friends and different authorities and with the mass media will all have an influence on the shaping of his or her identity. In this process the person's self-image is being developed. This self-image is a sum of how the individual perceives himself, within and outside of his personality, and a conscious feeling of inner coherence and the feeling of belonging together with other people.¹²⁵

Identity can be defined as a consistent and continuous experience of oneself and of what one is, that is, one's values, beliefs and aspirations. Thus the fact that individual identity is formed in a dialectical interaction with the environment shows that identity is not simply individual, but also has a collective aspect associated with it. The pluralistic society we live in has made it more challenging for young people to find the stable basis they require for the development of identity. The mass media obviously serve to intensify this effect. There is thus reason to believe that children have a difficult challenge in facing the increasingly complex array of values and experiences which are now available to them.¹²⁶

¹²⁴ Dagsavisen (daily newspaper), March 27, Oslo, 2004, p. 14.

¹²⁵ Pedagogisk-psykologisk ordbok. Oslo: Kunnskapsforlaget, 1991, p. 167.

¹²⁶ Otto Krogseth: "Religion og identitet." In Prismet no. 3, 1996, pp. 100-101.

5.2.3 Sex, family life and aggressiveness in relationships

10th graders expressing traditional values concerning issues like sex and living together, family life and violence, contend that they have been mainly influenced by their homes and by school. Those maintaining more “liberal” views refer to influence from friends and the visual media. The pupils themselves emphasize influence from friends more than from the media. Might there here be an influence process where leaders in the peer group environment actually are basically influenced by the media, but present their opinions as their own ideas? Teachers maintain there is a strong influence on children from the media on these issues, a stronger influence than from the peer group. Parents are basically concerned about the media as a competing force when it comes to ethics and lifestyle. This does not prevent them from considering the media as something positive, as we have already pointed out earlier.

A new study adds evidence to previous findings that watching television violence increases aggression in the long run. This longitudinal study shows that the effects of children’s viewing of TV violence continues into adulthood, and increases aggressive behavior for both males and females.¹²⁷

These authors refer to many psychological theories explaining the processes through which exposure to dramatic violence on TV and in the movies could cause both short-and long term increase in a child’s aggressive and violent behavior. News from ICCVOS, The UNESCO International Clearinghouse on Children, Youth and Media, comments on this new major study:

*Long-term effects with children are, according to the authors, generally believed to be primarily due to long-term observational learning of cognitions (schemas about a hostile world, scripts for social problem solving that focus on aggression, normative beliefs that aggression is acceptable, and hostile attributional biases). Short-term effects with adults and children are recognized as also due to priming, excitation transfer, or imitation of specific behaviors. Most researchers of aggression agree that severe aggressive and violent behavior seldom occurs unless there is a convergence of multiple predisposing and precipitating factors. Exposure to media violence is one such factor.*¹²⁸

Some of the results from this research show that children’s TV-violence viewing, children’s identification with aggressive TV characters and children’s understanding that TV violence is realistic, were significantly correlated with their adult aggression. Cecilia von Feilitzen in News from ICCVOS, elaborates on these findings:

More viewing, greater identification, and stronger belief also predicted more adult aggression regardless of how aggressive participants were as children. The longitudinal relations primarily reflected the adult behavior of the highest TV-violence

¹²⁷ L. Rowell Huesmann, Jessica Moise-Titus, Cheryl-Lynn Podolski, and Leonard D. Eron: “Longitudinal Relations Between Children’s Exposure to TV Violence and Their Aggressive and Violent Behavior in Young Adulthood: 1977-1992.” In Developmental Psychology. The Scientific Journal of American Psychological Association, vol. 39, no.2, 2003, pp. 201-221.

¹²⁸ News from ICCVOS, The UNESCO International Clearinghouse on Children, Youth and Media, no. 1, 2003, p. 6. The current study examines the relations between watching TV-violence at ages 6 to 10 (557 children growing up in the Chicago area during the 1970s and 1980s) and adult aggressive behavior about 15 years later, when the persons were 20 to 25 years old. This follow-up in early adulthood consists of data from the state archives (for 450 of the former children) and interview data (for 329 of the former children, and also spouses and friends). Aggression was measured by both self-reported and other-reported variables, ranging from verbal and indirect aggression over various kinds of physical aggression to arrests and criminal acts. TV-viewing variables were: TV-violence viewing; perceived realism of TV violence; and identification with aggressive female and male characters, respectively.

*viewing children. The upper 20 percent of boys and girls on any of the three child TV-viewing variables scored significantly higher on aggression as adults than did the rest of the participants.*¹²⁹

Another important finding from this longitudinal research is that more aggressive children are more likely to watch media violence because it makes their own behavior seem more normal. Their subsequent viewing of violence then increases their aggressive scripts, schemas, and beliefs through observational learning. This makes subsequent aggression more likely. Von Feilitzen expands some more on this scientific research:

*Although several parenting factors also correlate with aggression, the relations between watching TV violence and later aggression persist when the effects of socio-economic status, intellectual ability, and parenting factors are controlled. And even if watching TV violence is not the only factor predicting later aggression, there were few other factors shown to have larger effects.*¹³⁰

Finally, as we have seen in much other research, also in this research the type of violent scene that often leads to aggression, happens when the child identifies with the perpetrator of the violence. The child perceives the scene as telling about real life, and the perpetrator is rewarded for violence.¹³¹ However, when discussing violence on the screen, we have to take into account both the culture and context of the given presentation, knowing that these presentations basically deal with value issues.

5.2.4 The children and advertising

In one interview we were sitting in front of a very well dressed young girl who strongly insisted that she was not influenced by advertising in her shopping practice. We asked if she had bought the nice clothes she was wearing from low price shops. “No”, she said, ”I save my money to buy clothes of a certain brand”. We replied: ”Who gave you the idea that nice clothes had to be of a particular brand?” Then came a warm smile and an honest admittance: ”I guess I am a little influenced by advertising after all.”

We are sure she was honest both about maintaining “not being influenced” and when admitting “being a little influenced”. We met many who had to be made conscious of the fact that their shopping practice documented “a little influence from commercials”. Others maintained that pressure to buy certain articles actually came from friends more than from the media. Here again the question is whether or not the real source of pressure was the media, but mediated through a friend. Many admitted quite openly that such influence took place. Parents and teachers were quite convinced of the fact that children’s shopping habits and shopping attitudes came from influence from the media, particularly in the case of older children.

As documented in chapter 4, several pupils admit that especially their friends try to get slim to look perfect. We are pointing to the role of the peers, showing that friends often mediate and increase an influence that has its origin most likely from the visual media. Both young children and adolescents are new and most often inexperienced consumers and thus prime targets for advertisers. Jean Kilbourne expands on this:

They are in the process of learning their values and roles and developing their self-concepts. Most teenagers are sensitive to peer pressure and find it difficult to resist or

¹²⁹ Cecilia von Feilitzen: “Media Violence. Watching TV Violence and Aggressive Behavior.” In News from ICCVOS, op.cit. p. 7.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Huesmann et al., “Longitudinal Relations ...”, op.cit. Passim.

*even to question the dominant culture messages perpetuated and reinforced by the media. Mass communication has made possible a kind of national peer pressure that erodes private and individual values and standards, as well as community values and standards.*¹³²

As we have indicated in chapter 4, we have found that the mass media is influential especially with regard to their expressions of the ideal body shape of girls and women. The message of the advertisers is often that this ideal is possible to achieve through self-sacrifice and self-effort, leaving many girls to spend much time and energy on trying to achieve something that for many is unattainable. According to Jean Kilbourne, the messages many girls get through advertising is this:

*Primarily girls are told by advertisers that what is most important about them is their perfume, their clothing, their bodies, their beauty. ... Even very little girls are offered makeup and toys like Special Night Barbie, which shows them how to dress up for a night out. Girls of all ages get the message that they must be flawlessly beautiful and, above all these days, they must be thin.*¹³³

There are numerous studies about ideal body shape. A study of 350 young men and women found that a preoccupation with one's appearance takes a toll on mental health. Women scored higher than men on what the researchers called "self-objectification". Kilbourne comments on this:

*This tendency to view one's body from the outside in – regarding physical attractiveness, sex appeal, measurements, and weight as more central to one's physical identity than health, strength, energy level, coordination, or fitness – has many harmful effects, including diminished mental performance, increased feelings of shame and anxiety, depression, sexual dysfunction, and the development of eating disorders.*¹³⁴

Parents are in an important position to talk with their children and especially their teenage girls about how advertising may create and feed an addictive mentality that is threatening the health of many young people. Of course, advertising doesn't create eating problems in a direct way, and we know that anorexia is a disease with a complicated etiology. The problem is that both advertising and many pop-culture programs give an impetus about the ideal body shape that might create insecurity among especially many girls. Therefore there is a great challenge for home and school to communicate with children and help them to achieve a healthy attitude toward the body and toward food. Kilbourne elaborates on this:

*Just as the disease of alcoholism is the extreme end of a continuum that includes a wide range of alcohol use and abuse, so are bulimia and anorexia the extreme results of an obsession with eating and weight control that grips many young women with serious and potentially very dangerous results. ... Advertising does promote abusive and abnormal attitudes about eating, drinking, and thinness. It thus provides fertile soil for these obsessions to take root in and creates a climate of denial in which these diseases flourish.*¹³⁵

To practice media literacy principles in the home in cooperation with the school is important in order to empower children and young people to be critical towards the fact that the media

¹³² Jean Kilbourne. *Can't Buy My Love. How Advertising Changes the Way We Think and Feel*. New York, London, Toronto, Sydney, Singapore: Simon & Schuster, 1999, p. 129.

¹³³ Ibid. p. 132.

¹³⁴ Ibid. p. 133.

¹³⁵ Ibid. p. 135.

has the power to influence attitudes and increase the desire for all kinds of products. Especially in the United States we often see a combination of unhealthy food advertisements, and a propagation of a slim ideal. This is less openly expressed in Norwegian commercials. This combination sends conflicting messages to children, and parents and teachers in this regard need to talk to children and pupils about the risk of both obesity and other eating disorders.

Horgen, Choate and Brownell at Yale and Boston Universities give a warning with regard to advertising pervasiveness:

The prevalence of advertisements for unhealthy foods coupled with the pressure to be thin creates an especially difficult situation for children and adolescents. Research has indicated that television commercials promote gender stereotypes and unrealistic standards of female beauty and body shapes, thereby producing distorted body images. (Lavine, Sweeney & Wagner, 1999). The media have been blamed for creating a distorted reality that adversely affects women and contributes to eating disorders by glamorizing unhealthy behavior and propagating a false sense of homogeneity (Jasper, 1993). Theoretical frameworks such as social comparison have been used to explain the route through which the thin ideal portrayed in the media contributes to negative body image (Shaw & Waller, 1995).¹³⁶

The warning from these scholars might also be taken as a challenge for parents and teachers to communicate and connect with children in a deep and honest way. An important two-year study of over twelve thousand adolescents presented in the Journal of the American Medical Association tells us that the best predictor of health and the strongest deterrent to high-risk behavior among teens was a strong connection with at least one adult, at home or at school. We are then back to the importance of “significant others”, to use George Herbert Mead’s terminology, to build a good self-image in children’s encounter with the commercialized mass media industry.

5.3 Some reflections on the consequences for the teaching practice of our research findings

The term “teaching practice” implies both a need to reflect on what one arrives at as the theoretical base for teaching about the media, and the main principles for didactical methodological procedures in the classroom setting. Our research has had as its main focus the value aspect of L97 and the value profile of media productions, and how children experience being in this dual set of value impulses from both school/home on the one side and the media presentations on the other. This means that even if we are interested in pedagogy in its total approach, our reflections, in this context, are primarily concerned with the value aspect in the teaching about the media. Within the value perspective, we are going to point out some of the most relevant aspects in our research context.

5.3.1 Findings and theoretical pedagogical reflections

Our data show that a great majority of the children express as their personal view that there is a difference between the values they are taught at school and the values they encounter in media presentations. In the questionnaires most of the children maintain that they are able to discover this difference, and therefore are not very greatly influenced by these functional

¹³⁶ Katherine Balle Horgen, Molly Choate and Kelly D. Brownell: “Television Food Advertising. Targeting Children in a Toxic Environment.” In Singer, Dorothy G. and Jerome L. Singer (eds.): Handbook of Children and the Media. Thousand Oaks, London, New Delhi: Sage Publications Inc., 2001, p. 452.

value impulses. When confronted with a more direct questioning in in-depth interviews about their opinions on e.g. their shopping habits and attitudes towards problem-solving, several admitted that they were more influenced by the media than they had expressed in the questionnaires, c.f. Others admitted quite openly that they were influenced by the media both in their shopping habits and when considering violence as a real alternative in problem-solving. Some expressed as their opinion that younger children and others in their age group, might be influenced, but not the person now being questioned. It is interesting to observe that a new American book reporting on research findings among adults, "...violence in the media affects others, but not me", finds the same tendency as we have observed among the children participating in our study.¹³⁷

What kind of psychological mechanism is behind this idea that others might be influenced by the media presentations, but not "me personally"? Are these persons thinking of immediate influence on behavior and attitudes? Are they overlooking the deeper long-range effects? Are these persons, children in our case, overestimating their ability to have a critical attitude in their interaction with the media? This certainly is an important issue to keep in mind when discussing the theoretical basis for educating about the media.

Looking at the data from parents and teachers, who were the adults in the immediate environment of the pupils, they show much concern about the value influence from the media. At the same time they consider the media as something very positive for young people. There is a doubleness in the adult reaction that also needs to be taken into consideration when planning education about the media.

Another important finding is that parents, and to a lesser degree the school, get a top score for being those who really teach the children about what is right and wrong. These findings surprised us. Before collecting the data we wondered whether the peer group would not be a prime source of value and attitude formation. The data gave us a different picture. Why are the parents and the homes so important as teachers of the key ethical terms: "What is right? What is wrong?"

Do we here face a mistrust of the media on the part of the children? Do the media appear in such a way that they are not taken seriously by the children? Are the children, perhaps, not so sure about their ability to assess the implications of the value aspects in media presentations after all? Whatever the reason may be, this is something that must be considered when planning education about the media.

Professor Francisco Javier Perez-Latre points out that school and the media ought to have a joint responsibility to teach people, and especially the children, what is involved in living in a democracy. For a country which fairly recently had passed from a totalitarian regime to democracy, he maintains that it is important to stress that teaching democratic living also should be part of the responsibility of the national media industry. He contends that teachers and journalists ought to cooperate in certain aspects of nation-building teaching about democratic living. He also maintains the need for future teachers and future journalists to have some common teaching modules on human communication in their professional training.¹³⁸ Cary Bazalgette, Head of Education Development Unit at The British Film Institute in London, points out that during 2004 a conference is planned in Belfast, Northern Ireland related to the role of the media in society. This conference has been met with great interest. Why? "Because the role of the media is crucial in building a true democracy in that troubled

¹³⁷ W. James Potter: *The 11 Myths of Media Violence*, op.cit. p. 51.

¹³⁸ Discussions with Francisco J. Perez-Latre in Pamplona, Spain, July 2002.

area”, she said.¹³⁹ The media and democratic living are certainly aspects to be considered when planning education about the media.

5.3.2 Practical pedagogical challenges

All new developments in society will have a bearing on pedagogical research and practice. We are here concerned with what consequences the rapid technological development of the media industry and globalization will mean for pedagogy in a Norwegian setting. It is our opinion that L97 does not today meet this growing challenge from the media in a broad enough perspective. On the other hand we have shown that L97 gives a platform of values that do not necessarily deal with the media, but which are fundamental values for our society. We therefore maintain that there is a growing need to reconsider the scope of attention given to the media in Norwegian pedagogy. A central part of this attention is to develop better ICT-competency in our schools, couched in a sufficient theoretical frame, including the value aspect.

In this research we are of the opinion that the media industry represents a communication tool that can be used in a constructive or destructive way. For this reason we are convinced that we, through the new communication technologies, have tools in our hands that can enrich intentional teaching, if used in a proper way.

If this is to be the case, then there must be a reopening of a real dialogue between the media industry and the public in general on the role of the media in society. For this reason the basis and purpose of media education must be thoroughly evaluated and reconsidered.

The basic cell in society is the family, where children are born and brought up. In the Norwegian setting the public school functions on the basis of a mandate given to the educational authorities by the parents. The UN Declaration on Human Rights stresses the right of parents to bring up their children in accordance with their convictions. This UN-declaration, however, also makes it quite clear that this right is universal, and that no family should be denied this right by force or pressure. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child also has a paragraph which regulates the children’s relation to the media. Children should not be misused by the media for commercial or other purposes.¹⁴⁰

One central role of school in our visual society is to teach critical television-viewing skills, combined with developing a strategy for using new media constructively in intentional education. Another challenge is how one can assist the parents in coping with this new media situation, making new media technology available to their children combined with instructions, giving their children values and good manners.

Children today are faced with an electronic visual world that challenge scholars world-wide with regard to effects and especially the issue of the media’s role in identity formation. There are a lot of unanswered questions on how children perceive being on this electronic highway. The shift from a written culture to a visual culture is a fact that needs to be discussed by all academic disciplines. Professor Anita Werner points to the difficulties of knowing which path to follow in research, knowing that one effect from the media interacts with another influence:

In this situation I would like to emphasize the importance of multidisciplinary cooperation. We need a broad and open-minded exchange of ideas and research findings, a consolidation of our knowledge; one hindrance for progress being that research in this area is some fragmentary. Researchers on the role of the media in children’s lives coming from media studies, sociology, psychology, pedagogy,

¹³⁹ Discussions with Cary Bazalgette, London, September 2003.

¹⁴⁰ The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

*anthropology, cultural studies, film studies, literature, history and other disciplines know too little of each other's work.*¹⁴¹

This new visual world brings childhood into a challenging encounter with regard to the question of identity. In our research we have seen that different media messages bring different kinds of values which have moral implications. W. James Potter comments on the situation of the vast number of media messages that reach young people today:

*We need to dig below the surface action and infer the themes in the stories as well as the values of the industry that produces them. We are not born with a moral code or a sensitivity to what is right and wrong. We must learn these as young children, and children learn these things in stages.*¹⁴²

The different theories regarding the development of children have been scrutinized by several scholars such as Piaget who was concerned with cognitive development, and Lawrence Kohlberg who has elaborated much on moral development and finally Erik H. Erikson who presented mental or psycho-social development theories.¹⁴³ We have to be aware of the fact that the transition from adolescence to adulthood is a strenuous period of life with much at risk as far as the process of identity formation is concerned. Nina Huntemann and Michael Morgan elaborate on these questions:

*The popular media offer attractive avenues to ease the difficult and disturbing tensions of this developmental stage – broadly shared definitions of taste, style, values, models of personalities and roles, signposts for identities. The fact that what they provide are mediated representations is not in itself especially important in this context; it matters little whether young people perceive such images as true or false, as realistic or fictional. Every exposure to every media model provides a potential guide to behavior or attitude, a potential source of identification, a human exemplar we may use – whether in accordance with the model or explicitly contrary to it, and whether consciously or not – to define and construct our identities.*¹⁴⁴

Without going into all the complex aspects of the term identity, most often identity constitutes a person's deepest levels of internalized convictions both cognitively and emotionally. At the same time identity is often associated with belonging or identification to a specific group which could be described as a "social identity". Huntemann and Morgan maintain that identity is not a fixed, internal phenomenon but a dynamic socio-cultural process.

*Identity is fluid, partly situational, and thus constantly under construction, negotiation and modification. As a process, it is actively constructed as it is expressed – and vice versa. Thus, identity is multidimensional. It is defined, shaped, and transformed by a cast range of factors: physical, sexual, emotional, religious, racial, ethnic, institutional, familial and more.*¹⁴⁵

It is generally agreed that a process of "identification" is an essential factor of socialization. An individual acquires values and lifestyle through imitation of and identification with "socialization actors." The acquisition or internalization of values is not a given, but rather results of a series of interactions. Where traditional pedagogical theory often understands

¹⁴¹ Anita Werner: "Effects Studies and Beyond. The Need for Multidisciplinary Cooperation." In Carlsson, Ulla (ed.): *Beyond Media Uses and Effects*. Göteborg: Nordicom, 1997, p. 113.

¹⁴² W. James Potter: *Media Literacy*, op.cit. p. 30.

¹⁴³ For an overview of these and other developmental theories, we refer to Asbjørn Simønnes: *When Children are at Risk*. Bergen: Fagbokforlaget, 1996, pp. 43-68.

¹⁴⁴ Nina Huntemann and Michael Morgan: "Mass Media and Identity Development." In Singer and Singer (eds.): *Handbook of Children and the Media*, op.cit. p. 310.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.* p. 311.

communication as a one-way process, with the child as a completely passive receiver of knowledge and values, other conceptions of socialization regard children as active actors in the process of acquisition. One version of the latter conception is the transaction model. This model presupposes that both the child and the environment are continuously changing. Moreover, according to the transaction theory, the individual participates in influencing and deciding his or her own development.

To meet the new challenge of the visual media world, Douglas Keller argues that education needs to cultivate many new types of literacies to make this work for a new millennium. The presupposition for this is that the media are altering our society and bringing new dimensions into our culture, giving each of us a challenge to comprehend and make use of all these new possibilities. Keller expands on this:

*In this chapter, I argue that we need multiple literacies for our multicultural society, that we need to develop new literacies to meet the challenge of new media and technologies, and that literacies of diverse sort – including a more fundamental importance for print literacy- are of crucial importance in restructuring education for a high-tech and multicultural society and global culture.*¹⁴⁶

When facing the challenge of pedagogical practice related to media literacy, we see that both school and the homes are confronted with some demanding tasks. Information and knowledge are central ingredients with regard to giving pupils the possibility to gain a thorough media literacy perspective. According to Potter, media literacy is a continuum and not a category, and therefore we all occupy some position on this media literacy continuum:

*There is no point below which we could say that someone was not literate, and there is no point at the high end where we can say that someone is fully literate – there is always room for improvement. People are positioned along that continuum based on the strength of their overall perspective on the media. The strength of someone's perspective is based on the number and quality of that person's knowledge structure. And the quality of knowledge structures is based on the level of the person's skill and experiences.*¹⁴⁷

A real challenge is to get both parents, teachers and pupils motivated to start to climb on the continuum ladder of media literacy. When speaking about information we know that one type of information is cognitive, but there is also emotional, aesthetic and moral information. While cognitive information deals with factual information, the emotional domain deals with information about feelings e.g. hate and love, anger and happiness, frustration and so on. It is a fact that some people have problems sensing the emotional level of a message, especially if this involves more subtle emotions such as confusion, ambivalence and wariness. There has been a strong focus on the question of emotional intelligence in recent years, including factors of self-awareness, self-discipline and empathy.¹⁴⁸ To strengthen our ability to perceive, the emotional level of a piece of information can be nurtured and pupils and adults will benefit from that, especially with regard to developing relationships. In our data we have on several occasions observed that pupils have been able to perceive the emotional level of a media message, e.g. in their analysis of *Hotel Caesar* and *Friends*. It seems also clear that children are open to and actively in search of emotional experiences, and in our findings this becomes

¹⁴⁶ Douglas Kellner: "New Media and New Media Literacies: Reconstructing Education for the New Millennium." In Lievrouw and Livingstone: *Handbook of New Media*, op.cit. p. 90.

¹⁴⁷ Potter, *Media Literacy*, op.cit. pp. 7-8.

¹⁴⁸ Daniel Goleman: *Emotional Intelligence. Why It Can Matter More than IQ*. New York, Toronto, London, Sydney, Auckland: Bantam Books, 1997. Passim.

clear in the pupils' preferences of choosing programs for entertainment and excitement, c.f. chapter 4.

The aesthetic dimension of information deals with how to produce messages, and Potter elaborates on this:

*This information gives us the basis for making judgments about who are great writers, photographers, actors, dancers, choreographers, singers, musicians, composers, directors, and other kind of artists. It also helps us make judgments about other products of creative craftsmanship, such as editing, lighting, set designing, costuming, sound recording, layout and the like.*¹⁴⁹

The more information children and also adults get from this aesthetic domain, the finer the discrimination can be made between what is good and what is less good and between art and artificiality. This aesthetic dimension of media literacy is an important quality for young people who are developing their ability to be selective in their media choices and especially in their encounter with the commercialized mass media industry. The importance of training pupils and adults in the awareness of artistry and visual manipulation cannot be overestimated.¹⁵⁰

Finally, the moral information focuses on a different domain of understanding and that is values. Potter comments on this dimension:

*This type of information provides us with the basis for making judgments about right and wrong. When we see characters make decisions in a story, we judge them on a moral dimension, that is, the character's goodness or evilness. The more detailed and refined our moral information is, the more deeply we can perceive the values underlying messages in the media and the more sophisticated and reasoned are our judgments about those values. It takes a highly media literate person to perceive moral themes well.*¹⁵¹

A central thought of Potter's is that strong knowledge structures do have information from all of these domains, and one missing link leads to a weaker knowledge structure. It is not enough to be highly analytical if you lack the emotional information. A real pedagogical challenge is to help pupils to understand that media messages have a surface meaning along with several deeper meanings. Potter expands on this:

*People who are at a low level of media literacy are limited to accepting the surface meanings; thus the media are in control, because the media determine the meaning, and those meanings remain unchallenged – even unexamined. With only a limited perspective on the media, these people have smaller, more superficial, and less organized structures, which provide an inadequate perspective to use in interpreting the meaning of a media message. Thus, low-literacy people are much less able to identify inaccuracies; to sort through controversies; to appreciate irony or satire; or to develop a broad, yet personal view of the world.*¹⁵²

Potter's intention is to point out the fact that when a person operates at a high level of media literacy, then the person uses a set of highly developed interpretive skills to place a media message inside the context of well-elaborated knowledge structures. Such a person will normally be able to interpret any message along many different dimensions, providing the

¹⁴⁹ Potter, *Media Literacy*, op.cit. p. 8.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid. p. 9.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Ibid. p. 10.

individual with more choices of meaning. This shows how important it is to educate pupils in media literacy. Potter elaborates on this:

*When you are more media literate, you have many more options. And these options translate into more power by giving you more control over your beliefs and behaviors. With few or no choices, much of the world is closed, and you are forced to accept unquestioningly the dominant themes, values, beliefs, and interpretations presented in the media.*¹⁵³

One big challenge for pedagogical practice is, then, to help pupils to gain more control over their exposure to media messages, knowing that we cannot change the media themselves, but rather how we are exposed to the media. To teach children in the interaction between the intentional and functional education about how they are exposed to the media, and the effects those exposures might have on them, seems to be very important in our media-dominated society. We are now at the core of the challenge we are faced with in a visual environment, and Potter expands on this:

*In order to gain control over how the media affect us, we need to be able to recognize the full range of media effects and how they exercise their influence on us. This is not an easy task. Most media effects are subtle, they happen very gradually, and most of the effects take a long time to show up. By the time they have attained a high enough profile to be easily recognizable, they have grown deep roots in our subconscious and are very hard to change.*¹⁵⁴

A major goal in our proposed strategy of strengthening media literacy training, both for teachers and parents, is thus to empower both children and adults to understand the dynamics of the media, first of all by developing interpretation skills. Thus, as Potter puts it, “we can amplify the effects we want to have and discount those effects we want to avoid.”¹⁵⁵

Another main goal must be to help people to be critical viewers without destroying their joy of watching films and other media products. As we have seen in chapter 4, many of the 6th graders were critical to many aspects of *Hotel Caesar*, showing that many children do have a competence of interpretation

To avoid the tendency some people seem to advocate that every new piece of art is bad and every new medium is dangerous, we have to stress the fact that young people need to be taught media literacy principles both in school and at home. When we have succeeded in teaching our children how to see as much as possible in a given message, how to understand different levels of meaning and how to be in charge of the processes of selection and how to make meaning, this will give them more understanding and control. With such a strategy we are pointing to some of the main principles in reception theory, which has its roots both in literary reception theory, cultural studies and in uses- and gratification studies. When putting these principles into practice, both children and adults are more likely to gain an understanding from the message which enhances both understanding, appreciation and control.¹⁵⁶

One vital role of school is therefore to teach critical television-viewing skills, combined with developing a strategy for using new media constructively in intentional education. British and Canadian educators have often given impetus to many teachers of media analysis, and we will quote James A. Brown in what he feels are their key concepts:

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid. p. 11.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid. p. 12.

*Media messages are constructed (this involves choices and editing); messages are representations of reality (but how valid or accurate?); messages have social, economic, political, and aesthetic purposes and contexts (financed by megacorporations through advertising to audiences attracted by program content); individuals construct meaning in media messages through interpretation (viewers interpret the content through selective perception and “negotiating” meaning); and each form and genre of communication has unique characteristics.*¹⁵⁷

A real challenge for pedagogical practice is to educate teachers not only about resources and how to use different material, but further stimulate them to create connections between their curricular goals and classroom practices. This has to happen through activating pupils both in media analysis and production. James Brown expands on this strategy:

*In fact, this approach itself reflects the “empowerment” focus of media literacy. As one teacher epitomized the concept, “Media literacy is learning to ask questions, to put ideas together and to discover meanings in messages by thinking for yourself”.*¹⁵⁸

In Norway Ola Erstad has reflected quite broadly on the media literacy issue, and also on the meaning-creating process of media education. We have observed that there are differing views on how to define media literacy, understood as gaining certain competencies in handling and understanding electronically communicated messages. One aspect is the rapid innovations in the field of electronic communication. This means the improvement of existing products, presentations of new products, and the convergence of existing products, e.g. TV and PC with Internet. Ola Erstad in an article presents attempts made to overcome the media literacy definition dilemma. In the article he writes:

*For the first time in the history of schooling, the developments of information and communication technologies (ICT) have created learning environments that have the potential to emancipate students from a one-way knowledge provision from the teacher and the textbook. Electracy is a key term in analyzing these developments and is something young people develop by growing up in a digital culture.*¹⁵⁹

Electracy then is an umbrella term for all types of electronic literacy training. All electronic developments then are extensions and refinements of human communication. Apart from learning about new tools and the handling of these, the fundamental issues are, as we have contended earlier, basically the same. But innovations like TV and PC with Internet both enrich and complicate human communication, and have vast implications for individuals and for society as a whole. This is a constant challenge to pedagogy at any stage in the development of electronic devices of communication.

In another article Erstad suggests an educational approach as of the situation just now and for the immediate future. Erstad wants to base education about the media on a pupil-centered concept of learning. He argues for a perspective of media education linking culture and cognition, focusing on meaning-making. He tries to base such an education on what he calls a “culturalistic” approach, finding a “touch-down” zone between school competence and youth culture, where the media are an important ingredient. After having explained more in detail about how he thinks this can be implemented, he concludes:

¹⁵⁷ James A. Brown: “Media Literacy and Critical Television Viewing in Education.” In: Singer and Singer (eds.) *Handbook of Children and the Media*, op. cit. p. 689.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid. p. 693.

¹⁵⁹ Ola Erstad: “Electracy as Empowerment. Students Activities in Learning Environments Using Technology”. In *YOUNG – Nordic Journal of Youth Research*, vol. 11, no. 2, February, 2003.

*Media education might have an impact on certain areas, but not on others. The important element is to give room for reflection about the media, and identity-formation in a culture. I think and hope that media education has great potentials in this sense.*¹⁶⁰

Erstad here stresses education about the media as something that involves deep reflection on the role of communication in human existence.

On a global basis there have been many major conferences of scholars and educators exploring media education, and many underline the fact that media studies help bridge the gap between theory and practice both in school and at home. James Brown elaborates on the question of the purpose of media studies:

*Many agree that media literacy per se ought not be an instrument for social change but, rather, a cognitive skill applying to broad areas of living, “promoting students’ critical autonomy, described as the process of internalizing the tools of self-reflection, critical analysis and communication for one’s own purposes and motives”.*¹⁶¹

The school is faced with a real challenge of developing resource materials configured to their specific contexts. We, as in many other countries in Europe, are in the initial phase of forming a teacher training education that develops teachers’ understanding, attitudes and skills in the use of media literacy principles in their teaching and practice in the classroom. A lot of work lies ahead, putting the ideas and theories mentioned above into the didactical contexts suitable for teaching students, teachers, parents and pupils in the classroom. This is work aimed at empowering users of media products to make mature and knowledgeable critical assessments of the products to which they are exposed. This competency should include the ability to discern the various levels of media messages, including the moral value aspects. In the Norwegian public school, children and young people are given a value base that will help them to evaluate the value profile of media products, when being taught the handicraft of media literacy.

5.4 Media education or communication education – a fruitful reorientation?

Considerations about how to plan and carry out media education have been going on for several decades. Among the pioneers in this reflection and implementation process about media education, is the British Film Institute (bfi) founded in 1933 “to foster public appreciation and study of film and television”.¹⁶²

In 1990 there was a conference in Toulouse, France, which is considered to be the first international colloquy addressing the challenges of modern media for pedagogy.¹⁶³ Great Britain, Canada and Australia are generally considered to be the leading nations in media education endeavors.

Attending the conference of the International Association for Media and Communication Research, IAMCR, in Barcelona in July 2002, we participated in the section on media education. It was somewhat disappointing to observe that little theoretical reflection on media

¹⁶⁰ Ola Erstad: “Media literacy among young people: Integrating culture, communication and cognition”. In *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning*, vol. 18, no. 4, December, 2002.

¹⁶¹ Brown, op.cit., p.693.

¹⁶² Cary Bazalgette, Evelyne Bevort and Josiane Savino (eds.): *New Directions. Media Education Worldwide*. London and Paris: bfi, Clemi and UNESCO, 1992, p. viii.

¹⁶³ Ibid. p. xi. We also want to mention that two Norwegians participated in this conference – Asle Gire Dahl and Trygve Panhoff.

education was presented. On the other hand we found the papers on audience reception research very fruitful.

A survey prepared by The British Film Institute, Broadcasting Standard Commission and Independent Television Commission in March 2003 gives us a fairly updated impression of the debate on how to teach children aged 11-16 about the media in Great Britain. In “Executive summary” we read:

1. There is no clear and commonly agreed definition of “media literacy”.
2. The evidence of this review suggests that, in media education, policy-making, planning and provisions are fragmentary. As a result the level of media literacy are unpredictable and inconsistent, but overall are likely to be low.
3. The arrival of new digital technology has changed media education radically. Authoring and reviewing in all media are now much more possible. The capacity of the new software and hardware currently exceeds the skills and the knowledge of most teachers in how to get the most out of them. Technology, particularly in the new digital media, is developing faster than our capacity to train education professionals.¹⁶⁴

While in Barcelona we were surprised at not being updated on the debate about the theoretical basis for education about the media. In this British report we face pedagogues not able to be abreast of the present media technological development. What conclusions should be drawn from this situation?

Maybe it is time to reorient ourselves as pedagogues from being so preoccupied with media technology, because the main issue in the debate and in education about the media logically ought to be human communication? Then new technical elements are added as time goes, but does this really change the basic issue in teaching about the media, human communication in and outside modern techniques?

The report further points out that the reasons commonly given as to why we might study the media have changed as media education has evolved over the last 40 years. The views are often contradictory. Nevertheless, something ought to be done in this area:

*Media education has to be included within citizenship or contribute towards it because the easily led or unwary citizen is disempowered. Media understanding and awareness are significant and possibly essential aspect of political literacy. Our definition will include global citizenship, and awareness of how other countries are represented in the media will be part of that.*¹⁶⁵

The international debate on education about the media at present is, in our view, too greatly preoccupied with the media as such. It goes without saying that pupils must learn about modern communication technology, and become reasonably familiar with their use as a part of their public school education. When you get your driver’s license it involves more than how to operate a vehicle. You have a responsibility to other people on the roads. The way you drive your car has consequences for others. The way media technologies are used has consequences for others. For this reason human communication is the issue that should be in focus all the time, whether we study inter-personal communication in face-to-face situations or through mass communication devices.

¹⁶⁴ Tony Kirwan et al.: Mapping Media Literacy. Media Education 11-16 Years in the United Kingdom. London: British Film Institute, Broadcasting Standards Commission, Independent Television Commission, 2003, p. 1.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid. p. 17.

We maintain that education about the media should be placed in the wider context of human communication, because the mass media, in our opinion, is the real and only real “superpower” in today’s world. Therefore the way media technology is used influences individuals, families, environment, politics etc. Therefore mass communication discussions are ultimately about value issues related to human communication and coexisting in a world of differences. The “superpower” of mass media international corporations has created counter-movements like for example The Independent Media Center Network and Indymedia. But we live in one world and we need to communicate with each other despite our differences. But the counter movements claim to take sides for those in the world who are under-privileged, and who in reality have no voice in the much-praised “information society”. These are also important aspects when planning education about the media.

We suggest the following points for further reflection:

- Media education is an important subdivision of human communication
- Familiarization with media techniques is an integral part of education about human communication
- General social ethics, democratic living, and human rights should be a part of human communication

5.5 Possible future research areas

The media world is in continuous change, and therefore there is good reason to believe that the children’s media habits are changing continuously too. This development leaves us with a constant need for new information about the media world as such, as well as about the children’s use of and attitudes to the media. We suggest the following areas where more research would be useful in the context of our findings:

1. Much research on children and young people, including our own research, focuses mainly on general trends in the various age groups. In our opinion, there is particularly good reason to bring into focus the need for more research on variations within age groups.
2. The findings referred in chapter 4 show quite a lot of variation among the children in their use of the media. While 10 % of the 10th graders rent a video film several times a week, others never do. Even if the great majority of the age group prefer to seek entertainment and excitement when they watch TV, there is a small minority that prefers programs giving them knowledge and information about current affairs and issues. Some children think the influence of using computer games and TV games is mostly positive and others think it is mostly negative. Is it because of playing different games or because of having different standards of what is negative and positive?
3. When asked who has had the most influence on their attitudes to what is right and wrong, the majority of the children answered “my home”. However, a small minority answers “the visual media”. And when they are asked what statements which fit best with their own interpretation of concepts like honesty, caring, tolerance, conflict solving and so on, they choose different interpretations and report on influence from different sources. Why?
4. Why do some children feel that the visual media influence them to more easily accept the use of violence to solve a problem, while others say they get to hate the idea of using violence to solve a problem? Is it mainly because they view different

programs or because they react in different ways to the same program? What do we really mean by media effects? The immediately manifest effects, and the more subtle, long-range effects, including effects of viewing violent and aggressive incidents on the screen.

5. How much empirical evidence is available to substantiate the often-presented assumption “the market decides” the content of media products?
6. The often-encountered “double-communication” of the children regarding the influence from advertising and idols. Does this uncover a basic insecurity as regards the children’s self-esteem and self-image?
7. Do the adults, in this context parents and teachers, overestimate the vulnerability of children to media influence, while underestimating their own vulnerability to media influence?
8. Are the school authorities aware of the fact that many pupils want more integration of the media into their general curriculum? How can this be implemented in classroom teaching?
9. A possible pilot project? Media education, concentrating exclusively on education about the mass media, compared to communication education, in which human communication is seen in its entirety, and of which media education is a central sector.

The list of interesting questions could be made longer. There is a need for more quantitative and qualitative studies designed to throw light on issues like those mentioned above. We know that variables like gender and municipality may explain a little of the variations. However, it seems that individual variables in home, in school, and among friends, are more important. What we advocate is further studies aiming to throw light on the issues of attitude formation and of bringing up the children to become useful and independent persons in a media society.

Chapter 6: General summing up of our findings

6.1 Main findings (short version)

- There is a difference between the values in school and the values in the ‘parallel school’ of the media. This difference is observed by the children, by parents and teachers, and by the researchers.
- Most children, and especially the 10th graders, remain comfortable with this situation, and do not feel they are in a “crossfire” between the intentional school/upbringing and the “parallel school” of the media.
- The teachers and parents are more apt to think there is a “crossfire” situation for children today. The data may indicate that this may be due to adults being more concerned than the children about the more subtle influence of latent messages in the media.
- Most children, both 6th graders and 10th graders, say that the home has had the strongest influence on their attitudes to what is right and wrong.
- 10th graders expressing traditional values concerning issues like sex and living together, family life, and violence, think they have been mainly influenced by their homes and school, while those maintaining more “liberal” views refer to influence from friends and the visual media. The pupils themselves emphasize influence from friends more than influence from the media, while their teachers tend to emphasize the visual media more than the peer group.
- About 10 % of the 10th graders say that the media has a negative influence on their self-esteem. At least some of them connect the negative influence to the feeling that the media show an abundance of perfect bodies while their own bodies are not so perfect.
- Most children seek primarily entertainment and excitement when they use the visual media. Comedies and action films are the most popular genres. More boys than girls prefer action films, while more girls than boys prefer comedies/soaps.
- *Hotel Caesar* was the most popular TV series among the 6th graders and *Friends* among the 10th graders. There were many additional programs mentioned with a similar profile of action, excitement and entertainment.
- The Internet is more systematically used for obtaining new knowledge and information.
- Most teachers find that the pupils’ use of visual media gives inspiration and positive impulses to school work, even if some pupils may be sleepy at school because of too much use of the media.
- Most parents experience some degree of conflict between the values and norms for behavior they are trying to establish in the home and values they feel the media communicate.

6.1.1 General perspectives

The project has tried to see the media world from a child perspective, which for several reasons is a difficult task. Some questions may have been misunderstood. Some children may to some extent have tried to pay lip service to adult expectations, or they may have tried to provoke adults. The children have limited ability to express their real attitudes. As just mentioned, they may not be fully conscious of how they are influenced by the media. In addition, we should bear in mind that there is more than one child perspective, as different children live in their own different media worlds.

The children and young people participating in the study, come from seven municipalities in one county, Møre og Romsdal. For that reason our results should not be considered directly representative of a greater population. However, even though another sample certainly would have given different percentages in our tables, there is little reason to believe that any of our main conclusions would have been considerably changed.

6.2 Main findings (extended version)

6.2.1 Problem area (paragraph) A

What dominating values do we find in the "parallel school"? Are these values similar to or different from the set of values we find in the latest governmental planning document for the Norwegian public school, grades 1-10, L-97? We especially intend to focus on values and norms regarding relationships, attitudes, tolerance, and problem solving.

Methods and results

We have performed a content analysis of L97, the general section, focusing on what is said about values and value competencies. Particularly, we have looked at the seven "types of human beings" which L97 points out as essential to promote in the Norwegian public school (the spiritual, the creative, the working, the liberally-educated, the social, the environmentally-aware and the integrated human being). There are certain common themes or value tones which seem to be underlying all these types of human beings. We mention equal opportunity for all, human dignity, tolerance, solidarity towards persons in trouble or need, positive attitudes towards conflict-solving through dialogue, building relationships through a caring understanding, responsibility for society and environment (civic transformation), honesty (truth-telling), and spirituality (in search of purpose in existence). The ethical principles of L97 are found to be in harmony with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and related ratified UN conventions.

In our comparison of values in L97 with values in the "parallel school", we focused particularly on these four values: relationships, attitudes, tolerance, and problem solving.

To represent the "parallel school" of the media, we chose episodes of the TV series which showed itself to be the most popular ones in the relevant age groups of children. *Hotel Caesar* happened to be the most popular program among the 11-12 year-olds, and *Friends* among the 15-16 year-olds.

There are differences between the two episodes analyzed. While problem-solving by a dialogue seems to be absent in the episode of *Hotel Caesar*, it is clearly present in *Friends*, but more as an entertainment detail than as a serious attempt to solve the problems. The relationships portrayed in this episode of *Hotel Caesar* may be characterized by an "I do not care" attitude, and the absence of tolerance of a person of a different race is revealed.

The two TV episodes studied are different in style. Nevertheless, they show some similarities in their treatment of value issues. As the programs aim to entertain, the value issues are not

treated as serious issues. To the extent that the children use the programs to learn about adult life, there is an obvious value conflict between the programs and school.

Limitations

On the part of school the values to be compared are taken from L97, which is a normative document. On the part of the media, the values had to be studied in some selected programs. We cannot claim that the values appearing in these episodes are representative of values in the "parallel school" of the media. However, as comedies, soaps and actions are found to be the most popular TV- and video programs in these age groups, there is no reason to believe that the difference between values in school and values in the media is overestimated as a result of our selection of programs.

6.2.2 Problem area (paragraph) B

How do children and young people react to what they see and hear in the "parallel school"? How do they consider the relationship between the values and attitudes existing in the established upbringing/education passed on to them in home and school, and the values and attitudes they encounter in the products of the "parallel school"? To what degree do children and young people experience being in a "crossfire" between the intentional school/upbringing and the "parallel school" of the media- and computer industry?

Methods and results

Questionnaires to and interviews with children in seven municipalities in Møre og Romsdal provide the main part of the data material collected in order to get new insights about the problems listed in problem area B. 291 6th graders and 212 10th graders have answered the questionnaires at school. Those few absent in the classes were absent for normal reasons. 47 pupils have been interviewed. In addition, the teachers of the children (106) and more than half of the parents group (301) have answered a questionnaire. The questionnaires to the parents were sent out to them by mail. 31 of the parents and 42 of the teachers have been interviewed.

The results show that the visual media play an important role in the lives of children and young people. The great majority of them seek primarily entertainment and excitement when they use the visual media. Accordingly, comedies and action films are the most popular genres.

When asked to state what TV program or series they personally like best, most 6th graders chose *Hotel Caesar*, while *Friends* was most popular among 10th graders. They think these programs are made to give them fun, but some of them think they are made also with the intention of teaching them something about adult life. After watching an episode of the series (the same episode as was analyzed by two of the researchers in problem area A), the pupils filled in a pre-prepared literacy analysis form. The children seem to be aware that the values presented in these series differ from the values emphasized in school. However, when they are asked what changes they want for the program, most of them want more humor and excitement.

The 10th graders seem to be more satisfied with *Friends* than the 6th graders are with *Hotel Caesar*. They are aware of a difference in emphasis on values compared to what they meet in school, but they find such a difference OK and do not wish for special changes in the program. However, when about one third of the 6th graders say they wished that people would talk to each other in a different way and solve problems differently, and use less alcohol, one may wonder to what extent those answers reflect the children's own thoughts. They may be influenced by what they think they should answer, or perhaps by knowing that some changes in the program would make it easier for them to be allowed to see the program at home.

The children and young people are aware that the visual media can influence them both positively and negatively, but they no doubt think the influence is mainly positive. They maintain that they enhance their knowledge and insight through the use of the media.

Most children, both 6th graders and 10th graders, say that the home has had the most influence on their attitudes to what is right and wrong. The 10th graders were asked what they feel is meant by concepts like honesty, caring, tolerance, and their view of sex and living together, family life, conflict solving and violence. They give very different answers. Those expressing traditional values concerning such issues think they have been mainly influenced by parents and school, while those maintaining more liberal views refer to influence from friends and the visual media. While the pupils seem to emphasize influence from friends more than influence from visual media, teachers tend to emphasize the visual media more than the peer group. This discrepancy may indicate that the teachers believe that the children and teen-agers as a group are influenced by the visual media, while the individual young one experiences the influence as coming from friends, without being consciously aware of the possibility of being indirectly influenced by the media.

About 10 % of them say that the media has a negative influence on their self-esteem. During interviews some of them connect the negative influence to the fact that the media show perfect bodies, and their own bodies are not perfect. Even if this problem bothers just a few of the 10th graders, the interview material indicates that it may be serious enough for those concerned.

We have seen that the children seem to be reasonably aware of the values and attitudes they encounter in the most popular products of the “parallel school” differ from the values and attitudes passed on to them in school. However, most of them claim they are comfortable with this situation. They do not experience it as being in a crossfire situation, but rather as a more or less normal interaction between two sets of impulses for those who grow up in a media-dominated society.

From an adult perspective, it may look somewhat different. Teachers and parents who want their children and pupils to develop other values than those shown in a major part of the visual media, seem to feel a higher degree of tension than the children do. One reason for this may be that the adults are more aware of the subtle influence of latent messages from the media. Interview statements present some examples of children thinking of influence as getting a desire to do the same as they do on TV. More maturity is required to be aware of how TV influences the way one thinks about adult life.

Limitations

The project has tried to see the media world from a child perspective, which for several reasons is a difficult task. Some questions may have been misunderstood. Some children may to some extent have tried to pay lip service to adult expectations, or they may have tried to provoke adults. The children have limited ability to express their real attitudes. As just mentioned, they may not be fully conscious of how they are influenced by the media. In addition, we should bear in mind that there is more than one child perspective, as different children live in their own different media worlds.

The children and young people participating in the study, come from seven municipalities in one county, Møre og Romsdal. For that reason our results should not be considered directly representative of a greater population. However, even though another sample certainly would have given different percentages in our tables, there is little reason to believe that any of our main conclusions would have been considerably changed.

6.2.3 Problem area (paragraph) C

What challenges do the "parallel school" represent for pedagogical research and practice today and in the future? How do these challenges affect the life of the families?

In our opinion the data collected during this project have yielded certain new knowledge and perspectives on the values in the media and the children's' experience of these values. This knowledge and insight meets some of the needs for new information related to the important issue of the relationship between school and the media in the life of the children.

We also found that the home has an important role to play in children's interaction with visual media. Our findings show that a great majority of the pupils refer to the home as their main source of knowledge about what is right and wrong, c.f. chapter 4. This fact underlines the importance of close cooperation between home and school in relation to media issues.

With regard to challenges for pedagogical practice, the role of the media in socialization and identity formation are very relevant aspects for childhood and adolescence. In today's debate about the media in school, a discussion about how media literacy principles can be applied to value formation, is relevant together with a discussion of how ICT can be integrated into the school curricula. In the elaboration on the media, identity and values in school, there is a need to relate these aspects to reception research and text analysis theories.

On the basis of our findings we observe that several pupils admit that advertising is a problem, and in pedagogical practice we need to emphasize this issue.

In discussing children and television advertising, we need to show the importance of active contact and participation on the part of parents and other adults in discussing the seemingly manipulative power of advertising in commercial media. Very close to the influence of advertising is the question of whether some of the persons on the screen become such strong models for the children that they might be characterized as idols. This preoccupation on the part of the pupils with entertainment and their tendency to exclude serious program presentations, makes it natural to ask the question whether the younger generation is becoming more and more consumer-oriented? This certainly would be very different from the view of human dignity and other intentional ethical ideals found in L97.

Another aspect is discussing children and violence on the screen, taking into consideration that major findings from different longitudinal research on TV-violence, show that there is a certain correlation between violence on the screen and aggressive behavior, especially among boys.

In both these areas there is a need to involve pupils in media production in school as a part of media literacy training, helping pupils to become conscious about how the media function in society. How much time ought to be used on practical training compared to theoretical reflection, has to be carefully considered. Planners of education in Norway will point out that there is hardly any more room for new subjects in addition to those already included in the curriculum. However, it might be realistic to use a model where the communication issue is included as a part of already established subjects. Nevertheless, there are good reasons to offer a short independent introductory course on the role of communication in society as a new subject in the curriculum.

We might see that this "integration model", bringing the media into the everyday topics for teaching and discussion in school, might also make it natural that such topics will be discussed both in homes and in peer groups. This indicates a need to help parents to become more competent in understanding communication and in particular mass communication. The school will have a key role in challenging and encouraging parents and other advocates for

children to be alert in discussing both the immediate and the long-range effects of children's use of the media, both negatively and positively.

What we have mentioned above implies a need to consider certain adjustments of the educational practice in the public school of our country.

Network for IT-research and Competence in Education (ITU), is one of the measures taken by the Ministry of Education in ICT. This is a part of the Faculty of Education, University of Oslo, and is to acquire and transfer knowledge on how IT can be implemented, and what opportunities IT provides for the promotion of learning and development both for students and teachers.

The Norwegian government through the Ministry of Education has taken further steps in this direction by establishing a new research program for ICT integration in Norwegian education at various levels. This program is called "digital competence" 2004-2008, which replaces the implementation plan for ICT in Norwegian education 2000-2003 and its forerunner ICT in Norwegian Education 1996-99, (www.itu.no).

We also refer to the Parliamentary Report no. 39, 2001-2002 (St.meld. nr.39) from the Ministry of Children and Family Affairs on Environment and Living Conditions for Children and Young People in Norway (Oppvekst- og levekår for barn og ungdom i Norge), pp. 113-119, where the media and communication is especially discussed.

All changes in society have an effect on educational planning and practice. This is also the case when we face the growing role of the media in contemporary society.

With regard to pedagogical research, we see that there are still many unanswered questions that demand further research. Our research project has touched on some of these questions, and has discovered many more.

A great deal of variation has been found among the children and young people in their use of the media, their attitudes to the media, and their emphasis on different values. Much of this variation cannot be explained by variables like age and gender. More research on this variation would be of great value for educational practice in school and in the homes.

Accepting that education is a necessity to help children understand the world of the media, research into how this education ought to be performed is needed.

Some of the needs we have found which might eventually be issues for further research are:

The role of the media in society discussed by representatives of the media producers, the public, the researchers and policy makers.

- The value aspect in communication education
- Media ethics, theoretical basis and practical implications with special attention to the liberal-communitarian debate.
- Professional and non-professional communication rights in the information society
- Media education or communication education?
- The health and social adjustment effects of mass communication
- The values in L97 and the values of the consumer society as presented in the media.
- Globalization and local cultural values especially with regard to the question of identity, character building and tolerance.

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