

UNIT 9
MEDIA
Primary level

Media in use: I would if I could

9.1 We prepare an exhibition

Old and new media devices – what do we find?

9.2 The power of knowledge and skills!

Students prepare their presentations of media devices

9.3 Presentation time!

Groups of specialists show their technical media skills

9.4 We plan a media product

What do we do with our skills now? The students agree on a topic and a plan

Unit 9: Key concept – “Media” (for primary level)

Background information for teachers: students show each other how to use media devices

As shown in the introduction to this teaching manual, education for democratic citizenship and human rights education differentiates between three competences. This unit deals with media competence, which is one of the central elements which enable people to participate both actively and passively in civil society. In order to integrate this approach properly, the three competences are listed again.

EDC/HRE competences:

Competence in political analysis and judgment	Competence in the use of methods	Competence in democratic decision making and action
The ability to analyse and discuss political events, problems and controversial issues	The acquisition of the abilities and skills to find and absorb information, to use means and media of communication	The ability to assess one’s potential (and limitations) for political participation and to make an appropriate choice of a course of action

The second competence in the table – “competence in the use of methods” – includes media competence as a central element. In the following unit, the main focus lies on the ability to work with existing media, to use its possibilities and to know its boundaries. In media education, four dimensions of media competence can be differentiated:

Technical media competence:

- The ability to handle media correctly and to know about related creative opportunities.

Cultural media competence:

- Familiarity with the media “codes” and all aesthetic and societal forms of expression. Skilled users are able to understand media codes, can perceive media statements and understand them, and can use them for other purposes.

Social media competence:

- The ability to use the various forms of communication on offer wisely. Relationships are becoming more and more associated with media, including through different forms of “social software”.

Reflective media competence:

- The user is able to critically analyse the function of media, as well as his or her own behaviour towards the media at any given time.

The whole range of media education includes these four dimensions. The EDC/HRE perspective only touches upon some aspects of these concepts and does not replace media education. But, in connection with media education-related goals these represent essential strategies of media education. The direct connection between the technical media competence of teachers and the frequency of media use in the classroom is another reason why this unit is useful. Many teachers openly admit that they do not know exactly how to handle and work with the different types of media, or understand the possibilities for their use in class. One thing is clear, however: the more secure teachers feel in handling various media, the more often they use media in their teaching.

Both the practical media competence of the teachers and that of the students are addressed in this unit. Only once these have been addressed, does the unit focus on the use of media and the choice of a specific topic to work on.

The aim of education for democratic citizenship and human rights is to support the development of competences in three areas. This unit has the following competence profile:

Competence in ...		
... political analysis and judgment	... the use of methods	... political decision making and action
**	*	***

Toolbox support

In this unit the following tools from the students' toolbox will be used. The teacher must decide if some or all of the students need additional preparation in order to work with these tools.

- x Researching in libraries
- x Researching on the Internet
- 0 Carrying out interviews and surveys
- 0 Interpreting images
- x Mind maps
- x Creating posters
- x Holding exhibitions
- x Planning and giving presentations
- 0 Preparing overhead transparencies or a PowerPoint presentation
- 0 Writing newspaper articles
- 0 Putting on performances
- 0 Holding debates

UNIT 9: Media

Media in use: I would if I could!

Students show each other how to use media devices

Lesson title	Learning objectives	Student tasks	Resources	Methods
Lesson 1: We prepare an exhibition	The students realise that it is important to understand the technical details of media devices and to invest the necessary time for this. They prepare an exhibition of their own and the school's devices.	Using a device they are not familiar with, the students try to describe the device and the way it functions. They collect and describe different media devices and prepare a class exhibition.	A media device (such as a camera, etc.), handout.	Talks, group work, homework.
Lesson 2: The power of knowledge and skills	The students realise the diversity or the limited number of media devices that they can use. They are given background information about media and how to use media by the teacher.	Preparing a media exhibition in the classroom and furthering understanding of how one specific media device works.	Personal media devices, school media devices, teachers' handouts for Unit 9, lessons 1 and 2, students' handout.	Depends on the set-up chosen by the teacher.
Lesson 3: Presentation time!	The students become technical specialists for their chosen media device. They learn how to present prepared information.	As specialists for their chosen media devices, students make presentations in groups.	Media devices, individual means for making presentations.	Group presentations.
Lesson 4: We plan a media product	The technical media competence that the students have acquired will be applied. The students choose a topic and also the media devices they need.	Using a democratic and participative process, (in small groups and in a plenary discussion) the class decides on the topic they will work on and the media devices they will use.	"Mind mapping" tool from the Toolbox Handout: form to select the media devices for the chosen topic.	Group work, decision making in a plenary session.

Lesson 1

We prepare an exhibition

Old and new media devices – what do we find?

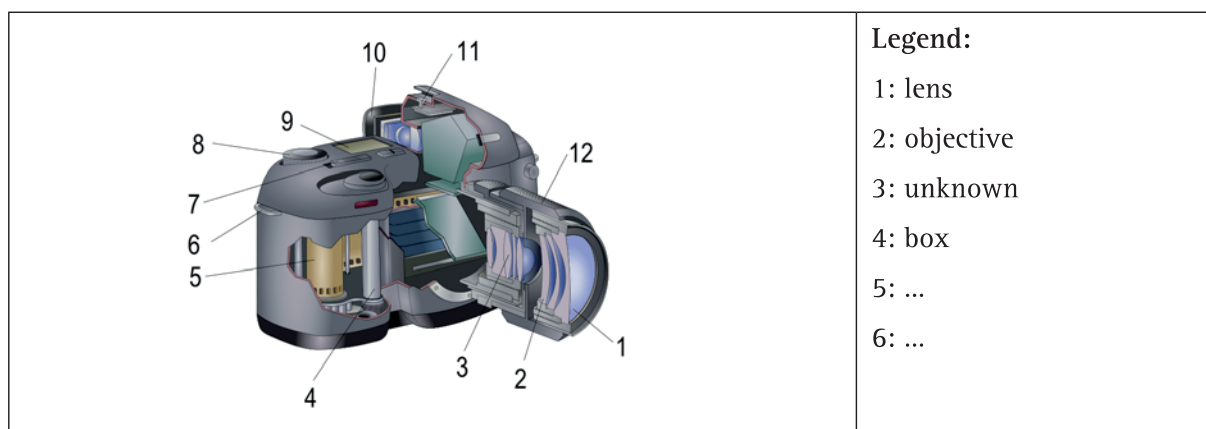
Learning objectives	The students realise that it is important to understand the technical details of media devices and to invest the necessary time for this. They prepare an exhibition of their own and the school's devices.
Student tasks	Using a device they are not familiar with, the students try to describe the device and the way it functions. They collect and describe different media devices and prepare a class exhibition.
Resources	A media device (such as a camera, etc.), handout.
Methods	Talks, group work, homework.

Lesson description

In order to make students aware of the topic, the teacher should bring a media device to school (such as a camera, a slide projector, computer, video camera, mobile phone, an old film camera, a tape recorder, an overhead projector, etc.). The instruction manual for the device will also be needed but the teacher should not make this available at first, however.

At the beginning of the lesson, the device lies on a table in the middle of the classroom. The students are given the task to explain how the camera or other device works even though they aren't familiar with it. They do that by making a drawing of the camera (for example) on which they indicate all the visible parts and buttons and label them (as shown in the picture below). It is also important that the students should draw the parts of the device they aren't familiar with. They should write down what they think these parts are for.

Visualisation of the student's drawings for the teacher:



The more complicated the device, the more difficult it will be to fulfil this task. It is important that the students should not be afraid of doing this. There is no right or wrong. The students have to become aware that such a device has many different possibilities and that it makes sense to get to know them.

Variation:

it is possible to copy the drawing including the legend onto a transparency for joint presentation.

The teacher then gives the instruction manual for the device to a group of students (if wished, he or she could have already done this the day before, without informing the rest of the class). Depending on the specific device, it will be impossible to describe and get to know all its functions. That doesn't matter at this point as this is only an introduction.

Next, the teacher explains the goals and procedure of the entire unit:

- Organising an exhibition of media devices brought from home and from school (lesson 2).
- Getting to know one of the devices and its functions and possibilities and presenting it to other classmates (lesson 3 – plus additional lessons depending on the number of devices).
- When the devices have been understood, the class decides on a media product (film, audio story, photo exhibition, photo story, etc.) and develops a preliminary timeframe (lesson 4).

At the end of the lesson, the teacher should collect all the students' ideas and give clear instructions on how to display all the devices in the classroom. He or she should hand the templates for the description of the devices to the students (handout).

Note: devices belonging to the school should be part of the exhibition too. Students who have not brought anything to school or students who have additional time should prepare the descriptions of the school devices and bring them to the exhibition.

Lesson 2

The power of knowledge and skills!

Students prepare their presentations of media devices

Learning objectives	The students realise the diversity or the limited number of media devices that they can use. They are given background information about media and how to use media by the teacher.
Student tasks	Preparing a media exhibition in the classroom, and furthering understanding of how one specific media device works.
Resources	Personal media devices, school media devices, teachers' handouts for Unit 9, lessons 1 and 2, students' handout.
Methods	Depends on the set-up chosen by the teacher.

Lesson description

At the end of lesson 1, the teacher (or a group of students) should prepare a table on which the exhibition should be placed. If the room can be locked up safely, the students could bring their devices in earlier and let the exhibition grow slowly. The teacher should accompany the students when they collect the devices and answer any questions raised. Parents should also be informed about why the students need to take their media devices to school.

2. Once the exhibition is complete and has been nicely arranged, the teacher could appoint “exhibition experts” – students who will be responsible for the exhibition and who can support their classmates. It is self-evident that the students must be considerate and careful when handling the devices at this stage.

3. The students (with help from the teacher, if necessary) should make a list of which groups of students work on which devices. The time of the presentation should also be included in the list. Depending on the size of the class and the number of devices chosen, more than one lesson might be needed for the presentations (see student handout).

The list should be hung up so that everyone can see it – it will thus also help self-directed learning. The list could look like the one below:

Media device	Group members	Date and time of presentation plus length of time needed
Video recorder	Tim, Mirca, Susanne, Mario	Wednesday, 14 February, 09:00; 20 minutes
Digital camera	Lena, Lisa, Sofie, Jan	Wednesday, 14 February, 09:20; 20 minutes
...		

As an addition to this lesson, the teacher could prepare a short input which he or she presents after the exhibition (approximately 10 minutes). There are two ways of doing this, (but well-informed teachers could also prepare other input):

Media in democracy. The aim is to show students the function that media have in our society. For primary school students, this can be basic information which helps them to increase their understanding step by step (see teachers' handout for Unit 9, lesson 1).

Dealing with television. As an alternative, the teacher could prepare an input about the topic "dealing with television", if this fits better into his or her concept of teaching (see teachers' handout 9.2).

These inputs do not have to be evaluated. Their function is to increase the students' background knowledge step by step. As in many other cases of knowledge transfer, it is possible that the students will not understand all the details. This has to be accepted in such complex situations and the teacher should decide what he or she expects of the students.

Lesson 3

Presentation time!

Groups of students show their technical media skills

Learning objectives	The students become technical specialists for their chosen media device. They learn how to present prepared information.
Student tasks	As specialists for their chosen media devices, students make presentations in groups.
Resources	Media devices, individual means for making presentations.
Methods	Group presentations.

Lesson description

This lesson (or this series of lessons depending on the number of presentations) should be prepared by the student. The presentations will be the focal point. The teacher's role will be mainly to accompany the teams during the preparation phase. Depending on the presentation skills of the students, this task can be quite complex.

The students should think carefully about how they want to convey all the information in their presentations. The toolbox for students contains various means of support to help with this, such as advice on:

- creating posters;
- preparing transparencies; and
- planning and giving presentations.

Some groups might wish to rehearse their presentations. From the teacher's point of view, giving the students the possibility to show their presentations to teachers or to classmates beforehand, including providing them with feedback, can give students a sense of security and can have a great impact on future presentations. This is important in relation to EDC/HRE, as one of the main competences in the use of methods in a democracy is to present one's own information and opinions freely and in a convincing way.

Lesson 4

We plan a media product

What do we do with our skills now? The students agree on a topic and on a plan

Learning objectives	The technical media competence that the students have acquired will be applied. The students choose a topic and also the media devices they need.
Student tasks	Using a democratic and participative process, (in small groups and in a plenary discussion) the class decides on the topic they will work on and the media devices they will use.
Resources	“Mind mapping” tool (in Toolbox) Handout: Presentation cards giving a short description of the media devices
Methods	Group work, decision making in a plenary session.

Lesson description

Together with the teacher, the students should choose a topic to work on (using the information they have gathered about the handling of media devices). The topic can be related to an area of EDC/HRE – for example, the students might decide to document all the playgrounds in their community and to list all the things that are missing from them. They could send this information to the responsible authorities or get it published by the local press. It might also be possible to document a construction site over a longer period of time (using both pictures and sound) and to design an interesting report. Once the topic has been chosen, the students should also decide what type of media devices will be used to document the information.

The teacher presents a plan to choose a topic that everyone likes and that will be documented using media devices. If the teacher wants to leave the topic open, he or she should collect all the students’ ideas on a list. The ideas could be collected in small groups, and the groups could then present their ideas in a plenary discussion. A joint list could then be written on a flipchart.

The search for a topic that everybody likes is complex, but it can be a good way of learning to compromise (the teacher should also evaluate this aspect).

Next, the groups of students should develop some preliminary ideas using the mind mapping tool from the toolbox. These ideas will be exchanged in class. If the students are using a mind map for the first time, the teacher should discuss the separate steps that are necessary and might even be able to provide an example, such as the following, on the blackboard:

- Write the name of your topic in the middle of your piece of paper and draw a circle around it. Be sure to use paper that is large enough.
- Draw a few thick lines radiating out from the circle. On each line, write the name of one sub-topic related to the main topic in the middle.
- From the thick lines, you can draw additional, thinner lines that represent subcategories or questions related to the sub-topic written on the thick line.
- Try to find as many different terms as you can and place them in the correct categories. You can use different font sizes, symbols and colours.

The same groups (or perhaps the whole class in a plenary session) then think about which media device they would like to use (see handout: presentation cards giving a short description of the media devices).

If these suggestions were developed in groups, the results should be collected.

In a plenary discussion, the question of responsibility should be addressed again:

- What kind of responsibility does a person who records pictures and sounds have?
- What does the protection of a person's personal rights mean?
- Who do we have to ask or inform?

Unit 9 should end with this step. Implementation of the chosen topic will take place as part of the curriculum subject under which the topic would normally be taught.

Background material for teachers

Unit 9 – Teachers' handout 1: media in democracies

In a democracy, the media are on the side of the people and the truth. Facts are presented objectively and comprehensively. Opinions and judgments are explicitly marked (through a clear distinction between message and comment, for example), as is information about which one has no known facts or about which one can only make assumptions.

Moreover, there is a diversity of media, and this leads to the provision of complementary information, as well as to the possible correction of one media source by another. Thus, the media user should be able to get balanced information on which to base his or her own opinions.

In a dictatorship, however, media are on the side of the ruler(s). The media support the power base and politics of the ruler(s) by using propaganda techniques (such as omitting information, forging information, or by emotionalising information, etc.).

However, the opposite can also be true. An analysis of the media in a country can also indicate whether one lives in a democracy or not. Freedom of opinion and the freedom of the press are of primary importance in a democracy: without these there is no democracy or full enjoyment of human rights. Moreover, in the past, the media has led to a number of “success stories” in the area of human rights. More than once media releases, television interviews or other visual messages have led to the freeing of people imprisoned for political reasons; and more than once people have sent SMS messages using their mobile phones in order to warn others about an imminent catastrophe.

Everybody is alarmed, therefore, when a consolidation of the mass media takes place in a democracy. This generally means that all media report an event in the same way, even though there may well be different opinions and judgments about this event.

Thanks to the protests and publications of a few critical individuals, one is sometimes still able to obtain balanced information and there is a chance that such consolidation of the media can occasionally be unmasked. The majority of citizens can only use the consolidated mass media, however, and the effect of this should not be underestimated.

Media also bears responsibility for the information it disseminates: can a journalist be sure that what he or she is reporting is true? Is their critical attitude justified or do they just want to be the first to report a “scandal”?

Using media also means exercising power. Whoever records pictures or sounds and publishes them should do so with a great sense of responsibility, and needs to be aware of his or her significance in a democracy.

Background material for teachers

Unit 9: Teachers' handout 2: working with television

1. Why are children so fascinated by TV?

Television offers constant change, relaxation and adventure. With the push of a button, one has the world – be it real or imaginary – at one's fingertips, without having to make any effort whatsoever, either physically or emotionally. Because there is a remote control and a myriad of programmes, one is able to zap between one thrilling event and the next. Children frequently identify with characters and personalities from various television programmes; they use television for information, and they use it when they have nothing better to do.

2. How much time do children spend in front of the TV every day?

In western Europe, the average daily television consumption by children aged between 3 and 13 is 90 minutes. Indeed, only 60% of children will even turn the television off. Furthermore, the television is often on while children are doing other things. Parents should try to set some rules for watching television and should also try to get their children to be a bit more focused in what they watch. It is generally recommended that the TV shouldn't be on all the time and that children should only watch programmes that are age-appropriate and also interesting and important.

3. Are there many children who watch overly large amounts of TV?

The so-called "TV addicts" spend more time in front of the TV than they do participating in other activities (school, games, meeting friends, etc.). However, there are very few children who fall into this category. It is not necessarily a problem if a child watches more TV one day than the next. The problem arises, though, when viewing is haphazard or when something isn't going right in the family or with the child. In such cases, TV consumption can be used to escape reality.

4. What do children of different ages like to watch?

Little children generally like to watch programmes from which they can learn something, as well as cartoons about fairy tales and adventure worlds. From about the age of 6, children start to become interested in gender roles. Boys then watch action films where they can identify with male heroes; girls develop a love of variety and music programmes, as well as series in which families and animals play an important role. At around age 12, music videos with the latest hits and series about youth and love start to become important. Almost all children watch these, but they also start watching more adult programmes at this point. Here, parents should take care to find out about the content of programmes in advance so they can avoid those that are not suitable for children.

5. What are the effects of television?

Television can be relaxing but it can also make children agitated and can "wind them up". This is due to the fact that images change quickly and there are often loud noises, especially in cartoons and action series. Some programme content conveys ideas of what the real world looks like and how it functions. Moreover, TV affects children's emotions and children react to seeing joy, fear or aggression in the same way as adults do. A lack of balanced comparisons can become a problem and it is therefore advisable to avoid only watching programmes of one specific genre.

6. Which informational programmes are especially good for children?

Most channels offer special programmes for children that provide information and convey knowledge about the world. Some channels even have children's news, which is presented in a way that children can easily understand. Moreover, news for adults that is shown at lunchtime or in the evening mostly avoids pictures that are not appropriate for children. However, adults should still be ready to explain to children what they don't understand.

7. How important is TV compared to other media?

For younger children, television is the most frequently used form of media. Over time, various other forms of media (CDs, MP3s, music videos, Internet TV) also become important, although the TV screen remains the main source of information and discussion.

Parents of young children should still take care that their children get to experience a variety of media: TV for current affairs and relaxation; the radio for listening to music throughout the day and for hearing some bits of news; books for fostering imagination and language skills; and computers and the Internet so that children can become independent learners and can communicate with others.

8. What is TV good for and when is it not so ideal?

Children who watch a variety of programmes (the news, talk shows, series, etc.) know a lot about current affairs and know many facts about life today. Television, however, is not so good for helping to solve problems. When one is having a fight with someone, or looking for the best course of action or trying to solve a brain-teaser, facts alone don't help. For this reason, television can never replace education at school or by parents.

9. Are adults role models?

Even young children imitate adults in terms of media use. If adults read the newspaper, then their children will be more prone to reading the newspaper. If adults spend a lot of time in front of the TV, then children will do this too. Parents should therefore never complain about their children's TV habits, but rather be a good example in this regard. They shouldn't just aimlessly watch TV but should be critical watchers.

10. What can parents do to encourage their children to be reasonable TV watchers?

Parents shouldn't ban TV but should watch it together with their children and explain why some programmes are good and others are not so good. Television should also not be used as a reward or as a punishment. It is important to find the correct balance. Children should have enough time for "real" experiences – spending time with friends, playing, and experiencing nature, cities and meeting other people.