

Critical media pedagogy – theoretical underpinnings and contribution to media education

Dissertation

Mgr. Petr Valenta

Keywords

critical theory, critical media pedagogy, media literacy, critical pedagogy, media, ideology, discourse, power, symbolic power, knowledge

Abstract

The theoretical dissertation analyzes the traditional media education model issues, which derives from the orientation of media literacy on the dominant paradigm of media effects research in media studies. Media education takes the „media effects concept” and uses it to organize its own teaching practice. Theoretical dependence on media studies and the concept media effects leads media education to protectionism and normativity, which is reflected in the directive establishment of knowledge, skills and values pupils may acquire. This situation has negative effect on efforts of developing critical media thinking as independent on social authorities. Moreover, media education potentially reproduces the dominant modes of knowledge about media and society, without revealing them as social constructions.

The theoretical basis for changing the paradigm of media education to become more critical and transformative practice able to form the student’s personality as an autonomous, critical-thinking and committed citizen is presented in the second part of dissertation. The media education could be in this regard based on the Marxist analysis of social and production relations, critical theory of the Frankfurt school, British cultural studies, semiotics, discourse theory and critical pedagogy.

These traditions make it possible to place the media in the context of social, economic and political processes, analyse and perceive them as part of the ideological institutional apparatus involved in the maintenance, reproduction and legitimization of social order. Production and distribution of meanings through symbolic communication is understood as a process of exercising power, since the dominant forms of knowledge, behaviour and values are also distributed along the meanings. Analysis in media pedagogy is directed to investigate the processes of power in society, which manifest and apply through the media but are also present in social rituals, interactions and generally in social practice. Knowledge and understanding of

the media is a part of general awareness of these processes and the necessary equipment for active citizenship striving to transform social practices wherever are manifested oppressive, unfairly or (socially) exclusively.

Introduction of critical theories is followed by defining the principles of critical media pedagogy, which is presented as an alternative model to the current form of media education. In the last part of dissertation author describes the possibility of using some of the concepts in media education practice, drawing from his experience as a lecturer at the Department of education of Faculty of arts.