

Media education on climate change: Experiences from the Finnish "ILVE" project

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Background: why media education on climate change? 1/2

- News media is the most important source of information about climate change
- However, media is not without biases, poorly justified arguments or misunderstandings
- **Media literacy** of the public is important for critical understanding of complex environmental issues such as climate change

Background: Why media education and climate change? 2/2

- **Media education** is defined as a process of teaching and learning about the media
- Result of (a successful) learning process: improved **media literacy**
- **Media education** aims at not only developing critical understanding but also active participation

ILVE project: media education material on climate change for schools

- Undertaken in 2005-2006 by the Finnish Environment Institute
- Main focus group: teachers and students at upper secondary schools
- Aim of the project: to develop a media education tool that can be used for analysing news on climate change
- 30-page booklet (background info on climate change, news criteria + ten sets of questions that encourage critical reading)

Production and dissemination of the media education material

- Participatory method: the tool was pilot-tested in four schools and one environmental youth camp
- Feedback from the teachers and young people was used to develop the questions further
- The booklet was distributed to all Finnish secondary and upper secondary schools (through teacher associations of biology, geography and Finnish language & literature)
- Available also in www.ymparisto.fi/ilve

"ILVE" EXERCISES

**Climate news analysis:
question package**

Ten sets of questions: food for thought on climate change

1. Basic information on the article (style, where published, key message)
2. Stakeholders: (from whose point of view is climate change presented? Is the scale global/local?)
3. Impacts of climate change (negative/positive, who/what is suffering or benefiting?)
4. Timescales presented in the article
5. Uncertainties (does the article bring up any uncertainties or present different estimates of risks)

Ten sets of questions: food for thought on climate change

6. Responsibilities: (who is seen as having the biggest responsibility to mitigate climate change and why)
7. Possibilities to mitigate climate change (does the article give examples on these and what kind)
8. Possible ways of influencing the readers' attitudes (who does the article appeal to and why)
9. Trustworthiness of the article and sources used
10. Analysing reader's own experience on the article, points of agreement or disagreement

Other material on the project website

- Additional sets of questions were tailored for different subjects at school: dealing more in detail with certain issues such as global equality, uncertainties, language of the media, power relations and responsibilities
- The package included an exercise of opinion writing to a newspaper

Assessment of the project

- Experiences from the pilot schools: the questions provoked lively discussions in classrooms
- Importance of participatory approach: however, teachers could have been involved already at an earlier phase of the material development
- Challenge: teachers often over-loaded with work, little time for introducing additional materials

Media education for a sustainable future

Media education can help:

- To better understand complex environmental issues such as climate change
- To develop one's own opinion, help different viewpoints to meet fruitfully
- To encourage active participation in mitigating climate change

Thank you!

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