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**VALUES EDUCATION THROUGH MEDIA EDUCATION IN EFL
CLASSROOM IN FORMS 8-9**
MA thesis

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this Master's thesis is to explore the possibilities of employing the requirements of the Estonian National Curriculum for basic schools in EFL lessons and create a lesson plan focusing on cross-curricular topics and general competences. The lesson plan specifically concentrates on media education and values education and the possibilities of combining the two with learning English.

The thesis consists of an introduction, two core chapters and a conclusion. The introduction briefly highlights requirements of the National Curriculum and the place of media education and values education in it while also commenting on the reasons behind the creation of this lesson plan.

The theoretical framework for this thesis will be provided in the first chapter. The first chapter elaborates on cross-curricular topics and general competences. Additionally, the chapter will look into the role and background of media education and values education.

The principles used for creating the lesson plan will be given in the empirical chapter. The description of the target group of students and the analysis of the lesson plan and the trial teaching round are also included in the empirical chapter.

The results of the study will be presented in the conclusion.

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INTRODUCTION

Kadri Ugur (2004: 3) finds that most of the world experience that people possess is actually media experience as most of the experiences we obtain in our life are mediated through media. Therefore, the role of media in our lives is great as it makes up a noticeable part of our life experiences. However, it is important to note that some age groups are more open and flexible towards media influences. Kotilainen and Arnolds-Granlund (2010: 7) have pointed out that "most Nordic children and young people have lived in digitally mediated cultures their entire lives", indicating that they have grown up in a world, where digital media has always been accessible. In the Estonian context, Kurm (2004: 7) has claimed that media is one of the main factors in the developments of one's worldview, sense of self, value system and world experience, highlighting the role of media in the development of one's identity.

Kurm's statement points out another important element of this thesis: the question of values education. The Estonian National Curriculum for basic schools states that by the end of basic school, student should be able to become a responsible and fully functioning member of the society (Vabariigi Valitsuse määrus 2014: §2). The Curriculum also lists a number of general competences and cross-curricular themes that form an integral part of the Curriculum, but do not have separate lessons planned for them - they are to be taught and learnt in subject lessons. Korb et al (2010: 167) have pointed out that the main role in teaching general competences and cross-curricular themes is the teacher's, stressing the importance of the role of the teacher in implementing the requirements set in the Curriculum. In that sense, values education and media education are quite alike. Teachers

are expected to include those topics into their subject lessons, but much of the "how to and when to" is the responsibility of the teacher.

The possibility of including general competences and cross-curricular themes in subject lessons seems to depend on the nature of the subject itself. Ugur (2010: 18) found that media literacy education is most commonly associated with mother tongue classes in the National Curriculum as this subject allows the possibility of reading, discussing and creating different media texts. While including media education in mother tongue classes is certainly beneficial, it could also be claimed that media education can be included in foreign language classes as well. Mahlakõiv (2013: 57-58) conducted a survey among Estonian EFL teachers and found that EFL teachers are more prepared to include cross-curricular themes in their lessons than the teachers of other subjects. Additionally, EFL teachers found that many of the topics represented in the Curriculum are already included in the coursebooks they use and that cross-curricular topics are important because they stress the ties between language learning and real life (Mahlakõiv 2013: 57-58).

The National Curriculum stresses that foreign language learning is communicative by nature (Vabariigi Valitsuse määrus 2011, lisa 2: 2), meaning that the first aim of learning a foreign language is to enable communication. This idea is reinforced by Raudsep (2010: 175), who finds that when learning a foreign language as means of communication, different carriers of information, such as media, electronic channels, literature and music are of great importance. Such additional sources help to make language lessons livelier and offer the student the possibility to develop their language skills in situations as close to authentic as possible. This suggests that including media materials in foreign language classes enables the students to learn the language in a communicative manner. In that sense, foreign language skills are seen as tools and carriers of information, allowing access to another culture. Differently from mother tongue classes,

however, in foreign language classes the texts and materials to be chosen should also be in accordance with the students' language level or it might happen that the discussion of the content is restricted by the lack of necessary language skills, which may prove to be demotivating for the students.

This principle of bringing media education into an EFL classroom is followed in Miina Härma Gymnasium, where the author of this thesis completed her teacher trainee practice. Once a week there are so-called "Newspaper classes" in English lessons, which are conducted in computer classes. These lessons are used to make presentations based on topical newspaper articles, to visit the websites of different newspapers and news agencies and through that acquire a better understanding of how newspapers as a part of media industry function and are created. Additionally, students expand their vocabulary as they are expected to learn the media-related words, plus the new words they come across while analysing different articles and texts. However, this combined approach of language learning and media education is only used on the gymnasium level. It is also easier to implement this approach to media education in a language-specialist school such as Miina Härma Gymnasium because there are five lessons of English per week as opposed to four (in the 5th grade) and three (6th and upwards) in the basic school where the author of this thesis currently teaches. Thus, the idea behind this thesis is to employ the requirements of the National Curriculum – teach values and increase students' knowledge of media literacy - and at the same time, help students learn English in a communicative context, which relates to the media they come across daily.

Media has not always been a welcome entity in the classroom. In 1983, Neil Postman found that due to the influence of media, children are losing their childhood. Media, especially television, enabled them access to things, such as sex and violence, which they did not come across in adult-approved print media. In his view, media causes

social change, no matter how it is used or what is represented (Postman quoted in Buckingham 2004: 19). Postman saw media as not only reflecting the society, but also changing it. Postman did not approve the use of television in education, because for him, as Buckingham (2004: 19) has put it, "the school is the last bastion in the defence of print culture". While Postman made his claim 30 years ago and saw media only as the culprit, it could be claimed that there is truth to his statement of media influencing the society. Don Tapscott makes a distinction between television and Internet, seeing television as passive and internet as active and enabling young people to express themselves and satisfy their need for knowledge (Tapscott 1998 quoted in Buckingham 2004: 20). As Postman only referred to television, which in Tapscott's view is passive it can be seen why he regarded it to be a threat to the educational system. As Tapscott brings out, however, the Internet enables students to not only receive information, but also to participate in its process of creation, thus making the process communicative instead of being merely receptive.

Nearly three decades later than Postman, Robin Fuxa does not see media as the enemy that should be kept away from schools as much as possible and instead advocates for a sensibly controlled approach:

Through providing children with choices between a few pre-selected possibilities that are both relevant and age-appropriate for group viewing at school (or through providing clear guidelines for students' self-selection of media for in-school work), students can learn to apply media literacy in their daily lives. (Fuxa 2012: 182)

Considering these suggestions, it should be possible to guide the students towards appropriate media sources that would serve educational purposes and complement the students' development. This should also create the possibility of using media for values education – when choosing texts to discuss in class, thought-provoking texts depicting clashes between different value systems could be chosen as it makes it easier for the students to see that not all value systems, be they personal or the society's, are the same. From the EFL point of view, a set of values arises instantly – culture and cultural

differences are an important part of a foreign language classroom as there are always at least two cultural systems at work – these of the source culture and the target culture.

The aim of this thesis is to investigate the possibilities of including values education through teaching media literacy in EFL classroom and provide a lesson plan to do so. The lesson plan was taught to a group of students in forms 8-9 and the process of compiling the lesson plan as well as the results of the trial teaching round were analysed thereafter. The current thesis is divided into two main chapters. The first chapter deals mainly with theoretical issues, such as the definition of media literacy and approaches to teaching it. It also elaborates on values education and the possibilities of combining values education and media literacy with language learning in EFL classroom. The material included in the theoretical chapter provides the framework for the second chapter, which is empirical and focuses on the process of compiling the lesson plan and its analysis.

The lesson plan compiled for the purposes of this thesis focuses on exploring how Estonia's state as a pioneer in the area of web-based services is reflected upon in different media sources. Hobbs has stated (2010: vii): "The inclusion of digital and media literacy in formal education can be a bridge across digital divides and cultural enclaves, a way to energize learners and make connections across subject areas". Moreover, as the National Curriculum also states, the integration of different fields of study helps the learner to shape their knowledge into a functional whole (Vabariigi Valitsuse määrus 2014: §5).

The author of this thesis believes that language classes, as was brought out by Ugur (2004) and Raudsep (2010), are indeed the most flexible in terms of content and allow different topics to be addressed in the classroom while also acquiring the subject matter – the language, be it the mother tongue or a foreign language, thus enabling integrated and contextual learning. The lesson plan created in the framework of this thesis incorporates authentic media materials in order to fulfil the communicative need of foreign language

learning and help students to become more aware of their own culture. The tasks were composed stemming from the texts and focus on both the content and language, more specifically on learning new vocabulary. The lesson plan was tried out on a group of basic school students between the ages of 14-16. The empirical chapter also discusses the problems with the evaluation of the learning outcomes of the lesson plan. The lesson plan has been included in the appendices.

CHAPTER I – THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

This chapter focuses firstly on general competences and cross-curricular themes in the National Curriculum and then proceeds to elaborate on the meaning and importance of teaching media literacy and values education, as well as on the possibility of combining the two with language learning in the EFL classroom.

1.1 General competences and cross-curricular themes in the Estonian National Curriculum

After completing the school program that has been set for basic schools by the National Curriculum, students should be able to become independent people. As was noted in the introduction, the Curriculum states that by the end of basic school, students should not only have certain skills concerning different subjects, but should also have independent personalities capable of making informed choices. The development of one's identity and independent personality, however, are not listed as separate subjects in the Curriculum.

Luisk and Ots (2010: 10) remark that there are certain elements in the Curriculum that are not a part of any school subject, but are required both at the level of the individual as well as the society in general in order to ensure that a person is a fully functional member of the society. Nevertheless, that students would acquire these competences is seen as the responsibility of the educational system. Thus, a set of general competences and cross-curricular themes are introduced to the curriculum.

The National Curriculum uses the following definition and divisions of competence: "competence is the aggregate relevant knowledge, skills and attitudes that

ensure the ability to operate productively in a particular area of activity or field. Competence can be categorized as general competences or subject field competences", pointing to the two different types of competence. Subject competences are the matter of subject lessons while general competences:

/.../ are very important in the development of a person into a human and citizen. General competences are shaped through all subjects as well as in extracurricular and out-of-school activity and their development is monitored and directed by teachers as well as in cooperation between school and home. (Vabariigi Valitsuse määrus 2014: §2, (1))

In the current National Curriculum there are seven general competences listed:

- Value competence
- Social competence
- Self-management competence
- Learning to learn competence
- Communication competence
- Mathematics competence
- Entrepreneurship competence (Vabariigi Valitsuse määrus 2014: §4)

The competences cover different areas of life, ranging from personal beliefs and personal growth (value competence) to the ability to contribute to the society (social competence, entrepreneurship competence). However, the competences that are relevant to the purpose of this thesis are value competence, social competence and communication competence. Social competence and communication competence both relate to media education as the aim of the first is to ensure that the student is able to "function as an aware and conscientious citizen" (Vabariigi Valitsuse määrus 2014: §4, (2)). The aim of communication competence, among other things is "to read and understand information and literature; to write different types of texts, using appropriate linguistic devices and a

suitable style" (Vabariigi Valitsuse määrus 2014: §4, (5)), stressing the ties with language learning. It can be claimed that since Estonia is increasingly becoming an e-state, in order to be an "aware" citizen, the skills concerning technology and various types of media are more and more important. Value competence, on the other hand, is explained as the ability "to sense and value one's ties with other people, nature, the cultural heritage of one's own country and nation and those of others, and events in contemporary culture" (Vabariigi Valitsuse määrus 2014: §4, (1)), highlighting both - the need to be aware of cultural traditions as well as the ability to understand and be open to changes in them.

In addition to general competences, there are also cross-curricular topics in the Curriculum. As Luisk and Ots (2010: 10) suggest, similarly to general competences, cross-curricular topics are described as topics not directly relevant to any subject in particular, but are to be included in the teaching of all subjects. The Curriculum states,

cross-curricular topics are a means of integrating general and subject field competences, subjects and subject fields and are taken into account in developing the school environment. Cross-curricular topics span numerous subjects, and fields that are priorities for society, and enable creation of an idea of the development of society as a whole, supporting the pupil's capacity to apply his or her knowledge in different situations. (Vabariigi Valitsuse määrus 2014: §14, (1))

The current Curriculum (Vabariigi Valitsuse määrus 2014: §14, (3)) lists eight cross-curricular topics:

- Lifelong learning and career planning;
- Environment and sustainable development
- Civic initiative and entrepreneurship
- Cultural identity
- Information environment
- Technology and innovation
- Health and safety
- Values and morals

Relying on the Consortium of Institutions for Development and Research in Education in Europe (CIDREE), Luisk and Ots (2010: 11) explain that cross-curricular topics are topics best obtained when taught and learned across two or more subjects. These topics can be divided into three interrelated categories:

- Topics, the aim of which is to develop a student's positive behaviour, attitudes and values. This category brings forward topics, which are not easily obtained through a single subject;
- Topics that cannot be taught through any specific subjects, such as environmental education and media education. Then main focus of these topics is on the development of skills, knowledge and understanding via integrated learning;
- Basic skills that do not depend on student's subjects (social skills and communicative skills), learning readiness and problem-solving skills.

Values education is viewed as belonging to the first group while media education belongs to the second. It could be claimed that it would be also possible to teach media education through one certain subject devoted to it. However, media education is practical in its purpose as its aim is to provide the student with a set of skills in order to help them cope in the media world. Therefore, it is more prudent to incorporate media education into a number of subject lessons as the Curriculum suggests, encouraging integration between school subjects and skills necessary for daily life. In addition to that, value competence is listed as both - a general competency and a cross-curricular subject. In the same manner, despite not being explicitly brought out among the general competences, media skills are included among communication competence, indicating that general competences and cross-curricular themes are closely related. As the topic of this thesis is dedicated to introducing Estonian culture as well, it has to be indicated that cultural identity is also listed as one of the cross-curricular themes. The next section will focus on media

education, different approaches to it and the research that has been conducted concerning media education in Estonia.

1.2 What are media literacy and media literacy education?

As was noted in the introduction, most of the experiences we call our world experiences have actually been gained through media, a pervasive force in our daily lives. Buckingham (2004: 4) explains that media consists of several forms of communication, combining visual images, sound and written text, which reflect upon the society:

The media do not offer a transparent window on the world. They provide channels through which representations and images of the world can be communicated *indirectly*. The media *intervene*: they provide us with selective versions of the world, rather than direct access to it. (Buckingham 2004: 3)

Hence, as the images offered through media are representations of reality, they can be understood and read in different ways by different individuals. In order to make the best and well-informed decisions, one needs to be able to analyse the obtained material critically, which, in turn, requires a certain set of skills. The aim of media education is to help students decode media texts and help them become media literate. Erstad (2010: 15) has stated, "Media literacy, a key term within media education, is also seen as an interrelation and bridging between what kids do with media in their leisure time and as the outcome of organized learning activities in school". Thus, media education also helps to connect formal education with informal education and bring the learning process out of the classroom and into the daily lives of students.

Media literacy can be explained through the notion of traditional literacy, which is also the ability to make sense of different texts. Douglas Kellner and Jeff Share (2005: 369) define literacy as follows: "Literacy involves gaining the skills and knowledge to read, interpret and produce certain types of texts and artefacts and to gain the intellectual

tools and capacities to fully participate in one's culture and society". In other words, literacy is the toolkit that helps people understand the constant flow of information from the society around them and vice versa, it also helps them to create messages of their own. Kellner and Share further explain (2005: 369) that literacies as such are constructed through education and culture and thusly have the ability to change in accordance with those institutions. Stemming from that definition of literacy and taking into account the rate at which our society is turning from print-based to virtual and word-based to visual, it could be suggested that though still vital, a traditional literacy is no longer enough. As the definition of literacy stated, it helps the individual in being a functioning member of society. However, nowadays a new kind of literacy, media literacy, needs to be introduced.

Buckingham (2004: 4) states that media literacy is the outcome of media education. Buckingham (2004: 38) outlines that media literacy is more than functional literacy - it is a form of critical literacy as it "involves a much broader analytical understanding". Hobbs finds that media literacy education enables the students to move beyond the boundaries of print texts to include other forms of text also, allowing a more dynamic literacy. Hobbs (2010: vii) defines media literacy as a "constellation of life skills that are necessary for full participation in our media-saturated, information-rich society". Hobbs presents these life skills on a diagram, depicting it as a process:

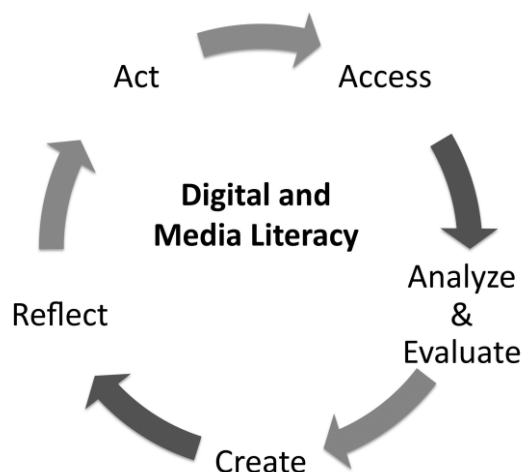


Figure 1. Essential competencies of digital and media literacy (Hobbs 2010: 18)

Hobbs (Hobbs 2010: vii-viii) continues by bringing out the five competences which are included in media literacy (see Fig. 1):

Access - Understanding information provided in the media, knowing where to find information and sharing it;

Analyze and evaluate - Analysing different messages and being able to identify the author, purpose and point of view while also evaluating the source's quality and credibility;

Create - Being able to create one's own media content using different digital tools and technologies;

Reflect - Analyze one's own media behaviour in terms of social responsibility and ethical principles;

Act - Being an active participant in social action by solving problems in different aspects of life, for example, family, workplace and community in general. (Hobbs 2010: vii-viii)

The five stages reflect upon the process of media education and show that media literacy is indeed a set, which comprises of a variety of skills, including being able to find information, critically analyse it, respond by creating one's own media and also being an aware consumer of media, showing it as a cyclical process.

Buckingham suggests that media literacy is ultimately the outcome of media education. However, W. James Potter (1998: 5) finds that media literacy is not a state, but a process as was indicated on Hobbs's diagram. In addition to that, Potter (1998: 5-6) states that media literacy is not an either-or proposition: whether a person is media literate or not. Rather, it is a continuum, which contains several degrees of media literacy. Even more so, Potter points out that it is possible to rise to a higher level of media literacy in this

continuum. A person's level of media literacy can become higher naturally as they mature, as Potter (1998: 6) puts it "as we reach higher levels of maturation intellectually, emotionally, and morally we are able to perceive more in the media messages". The other option for improving one's media literacy skills is active development. This requires constant critical analysis of media messages instead of receiving them passively. At the same time, as it is possible to reach a higher level of media literacy within the continuum, it is also possible to fall to a lower position when failing to stay active in the critical analysis process as the gathered knowledge quickly becomes out-of-date (Potter 1998: 6-7).

Marc Scheuer (2009: 8) finds that in a world where electronic media is gaining more and more importance, media literacy is no longer optional, but nearly as necessary as traditional literacy. Ugur (2010: 9) stresses that though media education can take place within homes and be a part of the life-long learning process, formal education system still has an important role. However, the formal education programs very often do not take into account this increasing need as is the case in Estonia where "media literacy is adequately described on the regulatory level, but is insufficiently implemented" (Ugur 2010: 10). Outside of Estonia, to compensate for this lack in implementation, there are different associations, the prime purpose of which is to promote media literacy. National Association for Media Literacy Education (NAMLE) is an organisation which advocates wider recognition of the increasing need for media literacy in the United States. They publish a journal and offer materials relating to media literacy education in order to provide support for teachers engaged in media education. NAMLE also lists six "core principles of media literacy":

Media Literacy Education requires active inquiry and critical thinking about the messages we receive and create.

Media Literacy Education expands the concept of literacy to include all forms of media (i.e., reading and writing).

Media Literacy Education builds and reinforces skills for learners of all ages. Like print literacy, those skills necessitate integrated, interactive, and repeated practice.

Media Literacy Education develops informed, reflective and engaged participants essential for a democratic society.

Media Literacy Education recognizes that media are a part of culture and function as agents of socialization.

Media Literacy Education affirms that people use their individual skills, beliefs and experiences to construct their own meanings from media messages. (NAMLE 2013)

These principles combine all the important aspects of media education, highlighting that media are a part of the society and culture and that each person may understand a media message differently, calling attention to the importance of media literacy as a skill necessary for the society as well as the individual. Hobbs (2010: vii) has written, "[p]eople need the ability to access, analyse and engage in critical thinking about the array of messages they receive and send in order to make informed decisions about the everyday issues they face regarding health, work, politics and leisure", summarising the principles through the needs of individuals of whom the society consists.

1.2.1 Different approaches to media education

Buckingham (2004: 9) proposes that the different approaches to media education can generally be divided into two polarizing categories: democratization and defensiveness. Democratization suggests that students should engage in media analysis and interpretation and aims to "build connections between the cultures of the school and those of the home and the peer group" (Buckingham 2004: 9), echoing Erstad's (2010) view on media literacy. Defensiveness, on the other hand, focuses on media as a possible negative influence on vulnerable children and seeks to protect them (Buckingham 2004: 10). Democratization and defensiveness can be viewed as the opposite points on one scale. However, media education can be further divided into three distinct approaches within this scale.

Firstly, we have the protectionist approach. As Buckingham (1998: 4-5) discusses, this view holds that media should be treated as a dangerous subject mainly in three respects: it is seen as a threat to the traditional culture, such as literature and literacy in general; it is considered to be a promoter of consumerism and materialism and finally, it is thought to pose a threat to children's morality, affecting their views on gender and ethnicity. Buckingham (1998: 36) notes, "the media are seen to be primarily responsible for making students sexist or racist". This approach rests heavily upon the shoulders of the teacher, who is the mediator between children and media, relying on the teacher's understanding and views on media.

The second approach is called "preparation or empowerment" (Redmond 2012: 107). This view uses the core principles of media literacy and aims to give students the skills to critically deconstruct different media messages and understand their intended audiences and purpose. In this approach, teachers are not the holders of knowledge as in the protectionist approach but rather the teacher views the students as active participants in the process (Buckingham 2004:10). Nevertheless, this approach does not give the students the productive skills concerning media (Buckingham 2004: 10), which were a part of Hobbs's cycle nor is it considered to have much effect as the students may simply restate the media views suggested by the teacher (Redmond 2012: 107).

The third approach focuses on the aesthetics of media as a source of enjoyment (Redmond 2012: 107). This view proposes that if forms of media, which are popular with students, are incorporated in their classes, they are more motivated to participate in discussions and therefore, learn. The aspect of enjoyment is enhanced by focusing on the understanding of how media is produced and providing students the opportunity to create media themselves during their studies (Considine and Share quoted in Redmond 2012: 107). Redmond (2012: 107), however, points out that quite often this approach is actually

"cleverly disguised defensiveness" because media production tends to reflect the values and ideals of the instructor or the educational institution instead of the learner.

Nonetheless, the three approaches are by no means finite. Redmond (2012: 107) suggests that they do not take into account the wide array of methodologies employed by teachers as they teach media literacy because it is highly unlikely that any teacher would choose one approach and pursue it throughout their teaching career, neglecting to take into account the changing world and the changing students, for that matter. Nor should the three approaches be taken as strict role models, as Renee Hobbs (2010: ix) also confirms, "Rather than viewing empowerment and protection as an either-or proposition, they must be seen as two sides of the same coin", pointing out the need to protect children from the media content that is not appropriate for them and at the same time, acknowledging that knowledgeable consumption of media and use of digital tools equips the person with a whole new set of skills and means necessary for self-expression.

It seems to me that the most serious drawback of these three approaches is that they consider the student to be a blank sheet, devoid of any previous media experience, questions or opinions about it. Thus, they aim to fill the student with knowledge that is considered important or necessary, neglecting to take into account the student's personal experiences through which they might learn best. Buckingham (2004: 14) suggested that media education is definitely on the move towards new approaches via democratization as it seeks to combine students' pre-existing knowledge of media and their media consumption habits with new knowledge, with critical analysis seen as a "process of dialogue rather than a matter of arriving at an agreed or predetermined position". Kurm (2004: 18) indicates that this approach is in line with the constructivist theory of learning, in which students are encouraged to draw on their previous knowledge on the subject matter and, through problem-solving they combine their existing knowledge with new

knowledge. As the constructivist theory of learning calls for study materials, which are as authentic as possible, and for situations that would be closely related to real life, media education and media literacy have promise if their teaching is combined with the constructivist theory.

1.2.2 Estonian background in researching and teaching media literacy

As discussed in the introduction, media education is depicted as one of the cross-curricular topics in the National Curriculum, meaning that media education is not generally employed as a separate subject on the basic school level, although there may be elective courses available in some schools. Ugur (2010: 9) brings out that in 2009, only 18% of gymnasiums in Estonia offered some form of media education. It would seem that due to the lack of national regulation of media education, teachers have been mostly left to their own devices while dealing with media education. Ugur stresses that most of the teachers working in Estonian schools have limited or even no media education experience from their own schooltime (Ugur 2010: 18), thus putting teachers in a situation in which they need to teach something they have not been prepared for.

There was a study of teacher's attitudes towards media education in 2004. In his Master thesis, Kurm (2004: 89) investigated the readiness of Estonian teachers to "implement media education across the curriculum". Kurm (2004: 10) himself notes that his thesis is the first attempt in Estonia to research teachers' attitudes towards media education. In his thesis, he conducted in-depth interviews with 252 teachers from different regions of Estonia (Kurm 2004: 90). He came to the conclusion that teachers are mostly aware of the need for media education, but their own level of media literacy is not high enough to be able to teach students. Kurm (2004: 8) highlights that most teachers are not

prepared to provide students media education and thus do not feel comfortable with it, bringing out the fact that the topic is included in the Curriculum, but the teachers lack the formal training to deal with it, highlighting the need for changes in teacher training programmes as well as the lack of suitable materials (Kurm 2004: 91). Ugur and Harro-Loit also stress the lack of media didactics in teacher's pre-service education, finding that it is hard, if not impossible to achieve the objectives of the Curriculum without proper preparation (Ugur and Harro-Loit 2010: 140).

Ugur's Master thesis (2004) discussed the topic of media education in basic schools. She focused on different approaches and ideas connected with media didactics and sought to implement those didactics in basic school media education. It was stated in the previous section concerning media education that one of the abilities involved in media literacy was creating one's own media texts. In the case of Estonia, however, Ugur (2004: 5) came to the conclusion that it is not reasonable to start media education with the creation of media texts, which tends to be customary in Estonian schools. Ugur also suggests that the curriculums up to that point have set the creation of media texts as a priority (Ugur 2004: 5), without taking into account the student's lack of general understanding of how media works, thus making the creation of media texts as one of the first assignments rather unreasonable. Concerning available study materials, Ugur (2004: 43) found that most of the media-related tasks in textbooks completely neglect to take into account student's existing media knowledge and are too specifically genre-related.

When Kurm's thesis investigated the teacher's readiness to deal with media education, then the aim of Hindrikson's 2007 Master thesis was to focus more on the students' perspective. She analysed a 35-hour media study course and its feedback in Lääne Gümnaasium. Hindrikson's thesis proposes that besides assessing student's knowledge of media, it is also important to study students' attitudes towards media studies, how they

present their values and how they learn best in the first place (Hindrikson 2007: 109). In her course, she employed a media portfolio to encourage the students to reflect upon their studies and learn through their own experiences. Based on the feedback for the course, Hindrikson also concluded that in media studies, it is rather hard to create or use standardized materials as all the students have different areas of interest and tend to only pick out the things they are interested in (Hindrikson 2007: 110). Moreover, at the end of the course students failed to compile a piece of news about their own life because they had only listened lectures on the topic, but had not learned to notice the possible material for news around them, or to put it differently, they failed to see the connections between their school lessons and their life outside of school, having the passive knowledge of how media works but failing to put it into practical use (Hindrikson 2007:103). Hindrikson found that in order to turn the students' passive knowledge into productive skills, it is important to get constant feedback from students, encourage students to reflect upon their studies and include different approaches to teaching, such as active teaching methods (Hindrikson 2007: 103-104).

1.3 Values and values education

Shalom H. Schwartz, summarising different approaches to values, brings out a collection of features, which are common to all values:

- Values are beliefs. But they are beliefs tied inextricably to emotion, not objective, cold ideas.
- Values are a motivational construct. They refer to the desirable goals people strive to attain.
- Values transcend specific actions and situations. They are abstract goals. The abstract nature of values distinguishes them from concepts like norms and attitudes, which usually refer to specific actions, objects, or situations.
- Values guide the selection or evaluation of actions, policies, people, and events. That is, values serve as standards or criteria.
- Values are ordered by importance relative to one another. People's values form an ordered system of value priorities that characterize them as individuals. This hierarchical feature of values also distinguishes them from norms and attitudes. (Schwartz 2007: 1)

Thus, values are concepts that we relate to emotionally and that serve as aims and ideals to strive for. Values may differ from person to person, but certain values are so universal as to be held in esteem in the society as a whole. Sirkka Hirsjärvi (1998, quoted in Vain 2011) finds that values are created in interpersonal relationships and they do not exist independently. In addition to parents and homes, schools and the educational system also have a role to play in values education because the role of schools is not only to offer formal education, but to ensure the harmonious development of a young personality. Values are created and shared in school relationships among students and between students and teachers, which is why values education holds an important place in the National Curriculum.

1.3.1 Values education and Estonian background in teaching and research concerning values education in subject lessons

Pille Valk writes that no education can ever be free of values education (Valk 2005: 4). Her claim is reinforced when one considers the National Curriculum, where value competence is listed as one of the seven most important competences to be achieved by the end of basic school. Moreover, part of the Curriculum is dedicated to core values of basic education stating that the aim of basic school is to "shape the system of values that serve as the basis for the successful interaction of happiness in personal life and society" (Vabariigi Valitsuse määrus 2014: §2, (2)). The Curriculum outlines that the central part of values competence is formed around "general human values (honesty, compassion, respect for life, justice, human dignity, respect for self and others)" and "social values (liberty, democracy, respect for mother tongue and culture, patriotism, cultural diversity, tolerance,

environmental sustainability, rule of law, solidarity, responsibility and gender equality)" (Vabariigi Valitsuse määrus 2014: §2). Hence, it could be claimed that values are strongly represented in the Curriculum and they cover different aspects of a human being's personal and the society's value system. As shown above, values are seen as being transmitted from person to person, so it can be said that in terms of formal education, students pick up values from their subject lessons and from their teachers and it is the choice and the responsibility of the teacher when and how to include them in lessons.

As the brief analysis of the Curriculum indicates, values and values education hold an important place in the Estonian educational system and society. The Ethics Centre of the University of Tartu has published several booklets¹ concerning values and values education in schools. Additionally, there have also been several studies that deal with the topic of values in schools and among students, such as Vain's 2010 MA thesis, which compared the values of Estonian and Russian basic schools students. Vain carried out the study among 181 students and found that Estonian students value security-related values as well as social values more than Russian students. Russian students, on the other hand, value academic abilities more than Estonian students (Vain 2010: 2-3). Vain's study outlines the fact that values differ between nationalities, even within the same age group.

As noted, values education is one of the central themes in the current Curriculum. Nevertheless, as Valk claims, no formal document can teach values on its own; values education comes to life as a result of the cooperation of parents, students and all of the teachers (Valk 2005: 4), confirming Hirsjärvi's (1998) suggestion that values are created in interpersonal relationships. As it is also the aim of this thesis to explore the possibilities of values education in EFL classes, it becomes useful to study how teachers integrate the topic of values into their subject lessons.

¹ A list of publications: <http://www.eetikakeskus.ut.ee/raamatud>

As Saart (2013: 6) aptly points out not much research has been conducted on how teachers include values education in their subject lessons. Saart's own 2013 Master thesis explores the possibilities of including values education in subject lessons, using the example of biology lessons on the gymnasium level. Saart found that it is possible and even a welcome approach to teach values combined with the subject matter, but in order to do that, the teacher first needs to be aware of the values and secondly, to relate the subject matter to the values in a natural way, meaning that the discussion on the topic of values should not be forced or artificial, but be a part of the subject lesson (Saart 2013: 59).

Another MA thesis from the year 2013 dealing with values is by Tiina Teppo, who studied values education in 7th grade literature classes. Teppo found that students themselves appreciated the possibility of discussing the topic of values while relying on the literary framework, confirming Saart's findings that values are best obtained when the discussion comes as a part of the subject. Teppo's thesis researched the best methods for dealing with poetry, drama and prose texts in the classroom to encourage values education. She came to the conclusion that discussion and questions and answers work best if they are not overtly controlled by the teacher as the teacher's role should be "guiding, coordinating, creating opportunities, and helping to come to generalization" (Teppo 2013: 68). Moreover, Teppo concluded that it is important to include values in lessons and it is possible to influence students' attitudes through it as it helps this age group of students cope better with the turbulent identity-building process (Teppo 2013: 69).

The social values brought out in the Curriculum are diverse. However, one subgroup that could be highlighted are values concerning the student's cultural development. Patriotism, respect for one's own culture and getting to know other cultures (cultural diversity) are included under value competence in the Curriculum as through getting to know other cultures, students should become more tolerant and accepting

towards the value systems of other cultures (Vabariigi Valitsuse määrus 2011, lisa 2: 2-3). The Curriculum also stresses that it is equally important for the student to be aware of their own cultural heritage and cultural developments and value them.

The requirements of the Curriculum come to life in subject lessons, where they are included by the teacher. It was pointed out previously that language classes seem to be the most open in terms of content and based on that, it could be claimed that general competences as well as cross-curricular themes should be integrated in language lessons. The next section will focus on integrating values education and media education into EFL subject lessons.

1.4 On the possibilities of teaching values through media literacy in EFL classes

As was noted by Ugur (2004), most of the experiences we gather throughout our lives are actually media experiences. While values are created in interpersonal relationships and transmitted in the same manner, they are also reflected in media. As there is a link between the values of the society and the media, it could be claimed that media can be viewed as a good source for values education, providing the possibility of using authentic materials as study materials. When including those materials into classes, however, one thing should be kept in mind. Buckingham (2004: 4) warns against using media to teach only content – using media as teaching aids, for example, using television to teach history or science, but failing to engage the medium itself into the discussion – under the pretense of media education as this does not give the students the possibility to develop the necessary analytical skills, enhancing only knowledge of the subject itself.

In addition to values being transmitted from person to person, values are also created between the teacher and the students and the students themselves. Buckingham notes,

The classroom is not a neutral space of dispassionate scientific enquiry, in which objective 'truth' can be easily established. On the contrary, it is a social arena in which students and teachers engage in an ongoing struggle over the right to define meaning and identity. Buckingham (2004: 48)

This means that the students' values may differ from the teacher's and it is normal because values are not a fixed concept as they change with the maturation of the person. Therefore, it is possible for at least three sets of values to arise within one classroom: the ones represented in the media text, the teacher's and the students'. When this situation finds its resolution in all the sides accepting or understanding each other, it could be considered to be a successful lesson. Ugur (2004: 26) also notes that teachers need to keep in mind that the aim of teaching media literacy is not getting the students to understand concrete messages but rather to give them analytical skills for dealing with similar messages in the future. Classroom discussion based on a certain amount of media material should set a so-called precedent for the students. Thus, it is important for the teacher to remember that both values education and media education are constant processes, in which it is difficult to check and grade the end result after focusing on a topic for a certain amount of time.

As mentioned above, Buckingham (2004) has claimed that media offers representations of the world and not the objective truth. This is to be kept in mind when dealing with media literacy in lessons because it shows that media is open for interpretation. While teaching media literacy, there are certain aspects that can be more elaborated and focused on. Redmond's (2012) study of a media literacy course conducted by three experienced teachers revealed that the teachers mostly focused on the enjoyment of media in their classes, during which they constantly drew the students' attention to three key principles: all media are constructed; media are constructed for a purpose; audiences

negotiate meaning (Redmond 2012: 109). These points are in accordance with the step "analyse and evaluate" in Hobbs's (2010) five-step diagram of media education. Through constantly reminding the students that though media is constructed by other people for a certain purpose, it is up to them to see more than one possible meaning. It is important for the teacher to not give students ready-made answers, but to help them draw as many conclusions as they can on their own. This approach can encourage students to use their analytical skills and help them put them into practice outside the classroom as well, in a teacher-free context.

Media education requires discussion and exchange of thoughts between the teacher and students as well as between students themselves. One of the key aspects of media education is the teacher's ability to create a free enough atmosphere in the classroom so that the students would dare to speak up and express their opinions. As Buckingham (2004:46) states, in the context of a school lesson, children will probably realise what the teacher wants or expects them to say – that they watch too much television, spend too much time on the Internet and will be inclined to say what they assume the teacher wants to hear. However, just as adults do not see media as possibly influencing themselves, but children only, so do children consider the risks to only apply to those younger than themselves, such as younger siblings. Thus, it might be helpful if the teacher does not firmly control the discussion, but enables an open-minded discussion, sharing their own media experiences in order to show the students that adults are also influenced by and consume media, indicating that it is a part of life.

The aim of this thesis is to combine media education, values education and learning English. The Estonian National Curriculum's approach to foreign language teaching stresses its communicative qualities, bringing forth that it is the purpose of foreign language learning to enable communication (Vabariigi valitsuse määrus 2011, lisa 2). As

highlighted in the discussion above, media education also focuses on communication, which is an essential part of any media education class, encouraging discussion. The exchange of ideas and views between students and between students and teachers reflects upon values. As was also noted previously, culture is listed among topics concerning values education in the Curriculum, where it is described as a person's ability to understand one's own culture and its differences from other cultures. It is also an essential part of designing the student's value system. On the other hand, culture is an essential part of any EFL classroom. The Curriculum stresses that in EFL classes, the aim is not only on learning the language, but also learning the target culture and noticing differences between one's native culture and target culture (Vabariigi Valitsuse määrus 2011, lisa 2: 1). Thus, similarly to media education, at least two sets of value systems are present in EFL classroom – that of the source culture and the target culture. Noticing differences in the two systems makes the students think about their own culture on a deeper level as well. The very idea of teaching culture according to the Curriculum, however, is to change and widen the student's perceptions concerning culture. Cullen and Sato (2000: para. 29) highlight, "We are so immersed in our own culture that we can only understand it by trying to see it from the outside", implying that a better way than reciting facts is to learn about one's own culture as it could be seen by a foreigner.

While the topic of introducing one's native land and culture is usually present in EFL textbooks, it tends to solely focus on cultural traditions and encouraging the students to see and introduce their country through the same cultural notions, thus creating a fixed and facts-based idea about their own culture, which the students then internalize and recreate when there is a need to introduce their native culture. This shows that culture is taught as being static rather than dynamic, thus not as a changing process.

Viewing culture as a finished product, however, is not the only approach to the topic. Tseng (2002: 15) claims that there is a new theory of culture, in which "culture is no longer a set body of information or 'facts' to be memorized, but a process for generating frameworks of perception, a value system and a set of perspectives. It is a mistake to assume that knowledge is a static object 'out there' to be acquired by the first or second foreign language learner." This is also the case with media education, which according to scholars (Hobbs 2010, Potter 1998) is to be seen as an ongoing process continuing throughout a person's life. The underlying idea of this thesis is to create a set of teaching materials, which would complement traditional EFL textbooks by addressing topics concerning culture not usually featured there while giving the students a chance to analyse different types of texts, thus combining two longer processes – media education and contributing to creating a wider and multilayered view on culture – in an EFL classroom. The goal of addressing those topics in English is to connect subject field competence – improving the students' foreign language skills using authentic materials – with competences and themes of the Curriculum focusing on students' personal and social development.

CHAPTER II – THE PROCESS OF COMPILING AND ANALYSIS OF THE LESSON PLAN

The National Curriculum states that there should be integration between different school subjects (Vabariigi Valitsuse määrus 2014: §5), thus helping the student create connections between different fields of subjects and organising the students' knowledge into a coherent and functional whole. Moreover, as was written in the previous chapter, there are certain elements listed in the general provisions section of the Curriculum that are expected to be integrated in all of the subject lessons – general competences and cross-curricular topics, which aim to help the student become an independent, responsible and socially active person. Some of the topics included there, however, can remain somewhat neglected in the classroom because it may be that the teachers do not consider them important compared to the subject itself, do not have enough time as they focus on the subject competences listed in the Curriculum or do not know how to approach the topic in the first place.

The aim of this thesis is to create a lesson plan addressing two cross-curricular topics also listed under general competences in the Curriculum – media education and values education. These topics are addressed in the English language, therefore aiming to combine the subject – language learning – with the general requirements of the Curriculum. The part of the lesson plan dedicated to media education and values education concentrates on improving the students' analytical and critical reading skills while also targeting cultural education as one of the focal points of values education. The objectives of language learning set expanding the students' vocabulary as a priority but also wish to improve reading and writing skills through various tasks based on different texts. This

chapter is empirical and, drawing on the principles brought out in the theoretical chapter, firstly focuses on the process of compiling the lesson plan, introducing the source materials, role models used and the objectives of the lesson plan, and secondly, analyses and discusses the lesson plan and the results of the trial teaching rounds.

The lesson plan was taught to a group of basic school students. The target group of this lesson plan were students in grades 8-9 and of ages between 14-16 years. They are all students of a basic school in a small town in Estonia and they were taught English by the author of this thesis from September 2013 to March 2014, so the teacher was new to the students. The basic school is a new school created on the basis of two different gymnasiums in the framework of the current educational reform² and provides compulsory basic education for a wide range of students from the town as well as the surrounding areas. All of the three groups of students were previously taught by different teachers. They have been learning English since the third grade, so it is their A-language (first foreign language). The Curriculum (Vabariigi Valitsuse määrus 2011, lisa 2: 9) sets that the students' language level should be B.1.2 according to Common European Framework of Reference³ by the end of basic school, so currently they should be between A2-B1. Nevertheless, it has to be stressed that the levels of individual students vary greatly. There are several students with special needs in terms of language learning (difficulties in writing, reading and text comprehension) concerning mother tongue and foreign languages as well as students with behavioural issues and special educational needs. There are altogether 55 students in three different groups and out of the 55 students, Estonian is not the mother tongue for three of the students – their mother tongue is Russian.

² <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/akt/111072013002?leiaKehtiv>

Discussion in Riigikogu on the topic of separating basic schools and gymnasiums:

<http://www.riigikogu.ee/index.php?op=steno&stcommand=stenogramm&date=1359547195&pkpkaupa=1&op2=print&paevakord=12028>

³ http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/Framework_EN.pdf

The process of compiling the lesson plan started with choosing a specific topic from among the values education related themes represented in the Curriculum to focus on. To make the lesson plan more concise, more easily manageable for the teacher and clearer for the students, the topic needed to be narrowed down and the focus of the lesson plan was set on teaching culture as an important aspect of values education. Yet, Cullen and Sato (2000: para. 28) find that culture is an extremely wide topic to teach, "A culture is enormous. It consists of all the institutions, all the behaviour, in fact all the man-made aspects of a very large group of non-homogeneous people. All that we can do is provide some pathways to enter into learning more about the culture". After consideration, Estonian culture as the students' native culture was chosen as the topic, with a special focus on Estonia's image as an e-state, E-stonia.

Since Estonia is an e-state where almost anything can be done electronically, it became even more important to include authentic media sources into the lesson plans in order to develop the student's media skills by giving them the possibility of working with non-textbook texts and materials in the hope of increasing their level of media literacy as well as developing their language abilities. In order to combine teaching culture with media education, the lesson plan focuses on the image of Estonia in various media sources, such as newspaper articles, blog entries and a video commercial, employing authentic media materials. Besides being in accordance with the communicative aim of foreign language learning, using non-textbook materials challenges the students in terms of vocabulary and language structures as they are more characteristic of EFL everyday texts than the texts usually present in textbooks.

2.1 Key aspects and objectives of the lesson plan

As was suggested by Tseng (2002), culture is not a collection of facts to be learnt by heart, but a changing and evolving phenomenon. Concerning media education, Buckingham (2004) stressed that media only provides representations of the world, not the absolute truth. As the aim of this lesson plan is to allow the students to see different ways of introducing their culture, there needs to be a moment of contrast and comparison present in the lesson plan, showing the students both that culture can be viewed from various angles and that one image of something shown in the media may not be the only possible one. In order to achieve this comparative purpose, the image of E-stonia will be compared with the traditional Estonia as it tends to be presented in textbooks.

One of the most difficult aspects of designing this lesson plan was finding the balance between different approaches to media education and to find a way to combine them with language learning. Redmond (2012) suggested that it is highly unlikely that any teacher would adopt one approach and pursue it throughout their teaching career while also indicating that the best fit would be to balance different aspects of different approaches – enjoyment, preparation and constructivist theory of learning. Additionally, Fuxa's (2012) recommendation of presenting students' with a few pre-approved texts to focus on can be seen as a mild form of protectionism. Hence, when designing this lesson plan, the following things were kept in mind: firstly, the lesson plan should provide the students with the opportunity to develop their critical reading and analysis skills; secondly, the texts should be of interest to the students, for example depicting topics they come across in their daily lives; thirdly, the lesson plan should also offer ways to integrate the students'

previous knowledge on the topic and lastly, help students improve their English language skills in a communicative context, improving their vocabulary as well as writing skills.

The objectives of the lesson plans are three-fold as they need to reflect all of the teaching/learning aspects of the lesson plan: values education, media education and English language learning while also being in accordance with the communicative nature of foreign language learning. The objectives of the lesson plan are as follows:

- Media education - be able to understand and analyse different media texts in terms of trying to see the reason behind the creation of media texts (Redmond 2012);
- EFL - address the communicative aims of language learning by providing the students with meaningful and authentic texts to work with (the National Curriculum);
- EFL - help the students get acquainted with media texts in a foreign language and improve the students' language skills: vocabulary, critical reading and writing (Redmond 2012: 110)
- Values education - show the students that Estonia can be described in two ways: firstly, in the traditional way using stereotypes learnt from textbooks; secondly, introducing our daily life and technological advances. The aim of this is to help the students become more aware of the different aspects of their own culture (the National Curriculum, Tseng 2002, Cullen and Sato 2000)

The next section focuses on the tasks and source materials used in the lesson plan and on the tasks concerning the final evaluation of the objectives given above.

2.2 Tasks, source materials and final evaluation of the learning outcomes

When compiling the lesson plan, the unit and task structure of Ülle Kurm and Mare Jõul's *I Love English* textbooks was used as a source for inspiration because the students in the target group have been using *I Love English* textbooks since they started learning English in the third grade. It was hoped that the similar pattern of units and tasks would help the students focus more on the topic and language and would require less explanation of tasks and activities. Moreover, *I Love English* textbooks and workbooks offer a variety of tasks focusing on improving different language skills and most units provide activities for all the stages of a lesson, hence providing a useful role model to create a complete lesson plan with introductory as well as concluding tasks. However, differences in the structure of the lesson plan from the units in the textbooks stem from the fact that the current lesson plan employs multiple rather long and challenging texts instead of only one text as is customary in *I Love English* textbooks. In addition to that, the lesson plan also aims to focus on media and values education in addition to language learning, as opposed to the textbooks, which are rather language-oriented.

All of the units in *I Love English* textbooks are built around a central text which sets the theme and title of the unit. There are pre-text activities, in some cases also while-reading activities and post-reading activities. Post-reading activities also include vocabulary tasks and tasks concerning language structures. New vocabulary is brought out separately unit by unit and the author of this thesis has always chosen to review the vocabulary with the students before reading the text as it shows the students where they can find the words they do not know and help to make the in-classroom reading and

translation of texts smoother. However, in *I Love English* textbooks there is also a certain amount of vocabulary and phrases, which are not included in the word list and are presented through different tasks aimed at improving vocabulary. Therefore, for the purposes of the lesson plan created in this thesis, a number of words were also provided for the students and pre-discussed and additional vocabulary came through discussion and tasks. Differently from the textbooks, however, students had to translate the words into Estonian themselves on the handouts provided for them over the course of the lessons when the lesson plan was carried out and how carefully they had completed the vocabulary translation task also was a part of their grade, giving the students both responsibility and freedom concerning their learning process.

Hobbs (2010: 23) provides seven instructional practices for teachers dealing with media education:

- Media-use diary
- Information search and evaluation strategies
- Reading, viewing, listening and discussing
- Close analysis
- Cross-media comparison
- Gaming, simulation and role-playing
- Multimedia composition

For the purposes of this thesis, a selection among those practices was made stemming from the time constraints concerning the lesson plan. As the topics in the Curriculum need to be covered during the school year, a limited amount of lessons could be spent on the lesson plan because the basic school where the author of this thesis taught this lesson plan vigorously checks whether teachers follow their plans and schedules, paying special

attention to new teachers. Out of the activities proposed by Hobbs, reading, viewing, listening and discussing were included in the lesson plan as well as analysis and cross-media comparison. Additionally to media education and values education, English language had to be included in the lesson plan and be strongly reflected in the activities as well. Thus, tasks focusing on vocabulary as well as improving reading and writing were created based on the texts. This, in turn, increased the number of tasks and made the lesson plan rather long. From cultural point of view, Cullen and Sato (2000: para. 27) add group assignments as an effective approach to values education, stating that group assignments "have more opportunities for using the target language, discussing the target culture, and gaining additional perspectives on their own culture." While teaching the lesson plan, group assignments also contributed to speeding up the discussion and functioned as warm-up activities.

The Curriculum suggests that using different authentic media and audiovisual materials enhances the student's ability to cope in a foreign language environment when needed (Vabariigi valitsuse määrus 2011, lisa 2: 10). However, the Curriculum also outlines that the texts to be used should be relatively short, but not adapted (ibid). One of the most challenging issues while compiling the lesson plan was finding suitable texts to be used as the basis for the plan as the texts had to be authentic media materials and at the same time be understandable to the students, taking into account their existing language skills. Moreover, different types of media had to be represented. Cullen and Sato (2000: para. 25) stress that materials for teaching culture should not be too difficult as the students might lose interest. After consideration, two newspaper articles from the newspapers from English-speaking countries were chosen, as well as blog entries from an American Italian living in Estonia to provide the students with formal as well as informal writing styles. Blog posts offer insight into how a foreigner sees Estonia and Estonians by giving a look

from the inside. However, a compromise was made regarding the level of difficulty of the texts: they were shortened when it came to newspaper articles and blog entries, but not adapted. Additionally, commercial clips from *Welcome to Estonia*⁴ campaign were used as well as the *Welcome to Estonia* sign, which is the visual representation of the campaign. *Welcome to Estonia* campaign advertisements show Estonia as it is chosen to be represented while articles from media sources abroad indicate how that representation is received.

Beforehand it was mentioned that the lesson plan focuses on three different aspects that should be evaluated in order to make sure whether the learning objectives set for the plan were obtained by the students or not. However, it was not easy to find tasks that would adequately check all of the three aspects. The tasks also needed to fit the time frame of two weeks and not increase the students' usual workload. Ugur (2004: 20-21) brings out the following problems concerning the evaluation of cross-curricular topics of the Curriculum: firstly, how to measure whether the competency was acquired or not and secondly, whether it is possible to grade the assignments related to them in the first place. It seems to the author of this thesis that it is not advisable to grade students' progress in terms of media education and values education based on only two weeks as both of these are continuous processes. Moreover, as was brought out in the previous chapter, they are also best taught across several subjects and thus should also be graded across several subjects. This, unfortunately, is not the usual practice in this basic school as there is nearly no cooperation even between the teachers of the same subject.

The students were given the lesson plan as handouts and were told that at the end of the lesson plan they would receive a grade, which would consist of three different parts:

⁴ *Welcome to Estonia* is a sign that is a part of a larger marketing concept in Estonia. Created in 2002, the aim of Brand Estonia is to introduce Estonia to foreigners, especially tourists and possible investors. <http://brand.estonia.eu/en/>

firstly, their overall progress and participation in activities as well as completing their homeworks (25%), secondly, a vocabulary test based on the new vocabulary gathered throughout the lesson plan (25%) and thirdly, a writing assignment – an e-mail (50%). They were also told that the teacher would collect the handouts with all of their notes as well in order to make sure that they have been working throughout all the lessons and have managed to cover all of the tasks.

The easiest to evaluate is the language aspect of the lesson plan. As the most relevant part of the language aspect was to learn new vocabulary, a vocabulary test was used to see whether the students have learned the words or not. The vocabulary test consisted of a vocabulary crossword (paraphrases as well as Estonian-English translations) and translation sentences (taken from the student's handouts). The second more elaborate task which formed a part of the final grade was a writing task in the form of an e-mail based on a prompt provided for the students. For writing the e-mail, the students were expected to once again work through the materials of the lesson plan independently. The third and perhaps most personal form of assessment was student's participation in discussions to take into account each student's personal effort and development. In addition to the handouts, which were collected by the teacher, the teacher observed the students and took notes of their personal contributions to class discussions while teaching the lesson plan. The aspects of values education and media education were observed continuously throughout the different tasks and discussions of the lesson plan, though the grades given to the students only took into account the language aspect of the lesson plan.

2.3 Analysis of the lesson plan after completing the trial teaching round

The lesson plan was taught in three different classes in two age groups, thus creating three teaching rounds. It was taught to all of the classes in the same manner, despite the age of the students and since no differences in the results stemming from the age of the students arose, possibly because of the very different language levels in different groups, the analysis of the lesson plan is conducted treating the students as one homogeneous group. The trial teaching rounds started two weeks before the spring break on the 17th of March as the obligatory materials had to be taught first, leaving a two-week gap between finishing the compulsory material and the beginning of the spring holidays. Initially the lesson plan was supposed to cover six lessons to allow slower progress and help the students focus on the topics, which are relatively unfamiliar to them, more thoroughly. Regrettably, two out of the six lessons were cancelled by the school due to various contests and performances, which also attributed to many students being absent from a number of lessons. Consequently, the pace had to be much faster than anticipated to cover all of the material, which led to the situation where some tasks had to be left as home tasks on which students had to work independently, limiting the time spent on discussion.

The lesson plan opened with the *Brand of Estonia* video⁵ introducing Estonia as the video provides a useful starting point for prompting a discussion. The video was followed by two articles in English dealing with Estonia's development in terms of providing their citizens with a range of services available to them online. The third part of the lesson plan focused on yet another type of media: blogs, more specifically one certain blog, namely the

⁵ <http://brand.estonia.eu/en/>

blog of an Italian-American living in Estonia and his reflections on his daily life and struggles in a country and culture foreign to him. Language skills were focused on throughout the course of the lesson plan – reading, translating, summarising and practicing new vocabulary were paid attention to through different types of tasks. In the following section, the lesson plan and the results of the trial teaching round will be analysed thoroughly task by task.

2.3.1 Introducing the lesson plan and the introductory tasks

As discussed in the theoretical chapter, constructivist theory of learning required that the student's pre-existing knowledge should be combined with new knowledge. The handout given to the students began with a task which aimed to direct the students to reflect upon their own culture from their current standpoint and to extract their ideas without any preparation or notable time for thinking. This also tested the students' ability to give a short presentation without significant preparation in terms of employing vocabulary related to Estonia and Estonian culture.

The students were asked to describe Estonia to a foreigner: they had to put down five keywords that in their mind would characterise Estonia best. This was done individually and later discussed with the whole class to find out which were the most popular notions. A summary from all of the three groups showed that the keywords that emerged from the students' responses as most popular could be grouped under the following ideas (the labels for the groups are taken from students' responses): "small country", "cold", "beautiful nature", "alcohol and drugs", "good people". Students struggled with certain words in English, such as most of Estonian national foods, the equivalents of "laulupidu" and "tantsupidu" as they wanted to bring out song and dance

festivals and the fact that Estonian people like to sing and eat curious foods, such as black pudding and black bread. This struggle with finding the right words was not expected as all of the words that concerned them have been used in their previous textbooks and some of them have even occurred in English lessons previously during the same school year.

Only two students out of 55 mentioned our status as an e-state. It should also be noted that when discussing the task with the whole class, more negative things surfaced from the students, such as the constant lack of money, "depressing small towns" and even politics and politicians were labelled to be "idiots". Based on the preliminary task, it seemed that the students' first response was to put down the more traditional keywords relating to Estonian nature and culture, even if they could not recall the exact word in English. Yet later, when more time was spent exchanging ideas, they went deeper into the topic and brought out negative and more realistic aspects related to daily life, indicating that, as a result of the discussion, they paid more attention to the topic and were more willing to share their ideas.

According to Erstad (2010), media literacy is the key to bringing together students' media experience in their spare time and educational purposes. As advertisements are a part of media, the aim of the next task was to see how much students notice them without focusing on advertisements specifically. The task involved introducing the *Welcome to Estonia* sign and the students had to decide if they had seen it before, decide by whom it could be designed and to whom it could be addressed. Out of the 55 students, only six said that they had not noticed the sign anywhere. The others claimed that they had seen it on stickers, cars, T-shirts, television and most commonly, on anything related to song festivals. Students interpreted the sign quite aptly as "welcoming people coming to Estonia". Curiously enough, 21 students found that the sign was designed by people outside of Estonia. When asked for an explanation for either option, the only answer

provided was "Estonians wouldn't advertise themselves like that". Further discussion revealed that the students who considered the sign to have been designed by people outside of Estonia found that Estonians would care about their "outlook" (meaning public image, appearance) enough to make the effort in the first place, showing the students' opinion of Estonians as being relatively poor. In Hobbs's five-step diagram (p.15), this task was in accordance with the first two stages: access and analyse and evaluate. Though all of the students did not manage to correctly identify whether the design was by Estonians or not, they managed to spot that the underlying goal was to advertise Estonia. Yet, it could be said that there was another step, which is not included on Hobbs's diagram: noticing, an unconscious act, as this precedes accessing, a conscious act of finding information.

The introductory task into the lesson plan proper was based on the *Welcome to Estonia* video advertisement, which was shown to the students. The 1-minute long video clip installs side-by-side two different aspects of Estonia: the traditional Estonia of beautiful and remote nature and fresh produce, which can be familiar to the students from textbooks, as well as the fast-developing state of technological advances and innovation. In order to make sure that the students focus on the video, noticing of specific elements was used: they were asked to write down as many of the keywords as they could and then compare their notes in small groups. Cullen and Sato (2000: para. 15) claim that equipping students with a task while viewing a video "gives a focus to the materials by making it into a task, rather than simply passive viewing or listening". Group work was chosen as it gave the students the chance to get down all of the keywords with the help of their peers. For some language practice, they were also asked to translate the keywords into Estonian and these were later included as a part of the word test.

The language-oriented task was followed by a group discussion based on the questions provided for them and later followed-up by a class discussion. The group

discussion proved to be a good choice because the discussions were unexpectedly lively. All groups found that the video was made to attract more people to Estonia (therefore oriented towards foreigners), and now all students also agreed that the video was made by Estonians themselves. The students were also asked to explain further how Estonia could be seen as "positively surprising" (the main keyword used to conclude the video). Majority of the groups agreed that it is surprising because Estonia is so small, but there is so much to explore and (examples given without editing) "even it's a small country you still have things to do here. Waterparks, adventure parks #fun. Heres beautiful natur tho. SWAG☺". However, none of the groups came forth with the idea that Estonia could be surprising because besides the beautiful nature, Estonia is also technologically advanced, thus missing the central comparison between the images of traditional Estonia and modern Estonia. This could be due to the fact that so few students came up with the idea to describe Estonia as an e-state in the first task and therefore did not consider it to be of any significance in the first place. Moreover, it could be claimed that it was easier for the students to repeat the things that had been discussed previously, as they knew that it would be "correct" and use the vocabulary that was already discussed, therefore remaining in their comfort zone without taking the risk of possibly getting the answer wrong.

The section based on the video concluded with an independent task in the form of a short essay in which the students had to imagine that they were foreigners. Students noted that the video would probably encourage them to come to Estonia because "it looks amazing". However, some of the groups also added that they would probably be disappointed later on because "Estonia iz not az cool as its shown there". Interestingly, in this task some of the groups managed to bring forth the widespread free wi-fi shown in the video, which they had not mentioned in the previous task, possibly because now it had been mentioned in the class discussion already. As became evident from the written

answers on the handouts, students do not pay much attention to proper language use when they are aware that they are not being graded for it.

Based on the introductory tasks it could be speculated that students had quite fixed ideas about their culture and cultural heritage and when asked to describe their native culture without any preparation, they would bring out traditional, facts-based aspects of it. However, by discussing on the topic further, they started to think more about the daily life in Estonia, but promptly brought forward only negative aspects of it. The introductory tasks also revealed that though the students did not manage to express all of their ideas in English on their own, during group discussions and class discussion, when they had the opportunity to use other students' knowledge as well, they were more eager to elaborate on and explain their ideas in English. Even more so, once a word or a phrase was given by the teacher, the students used it. On the other hand, when faced with the situation when they needed to speak up independently, they were rather hesitant, which could be attributed to the unfamiliarity of the topic as well as the students' aim of trying to guess what would be the answer that the teacher prefers, echoing Buckingham's statements (p. 28) concerning the necessity of a free atmosphere in the classroom to prevent such situations and make the students feel more confident.

2.3.2 Tasks based on newspaper articles

The next section of the lesson plan was built around two newspaper articles, both of which focused on Estonia's advances in the field of technology. Sten Tamkivi's (2014) article mainly discusses the availability of ID-card based services and the uniqueness of Estonian ID-code system. The other article is by Tim Mansel (2013) and its focus is on start-up companies and IT-education for children in Estonia. Generally, Tim Mansel's

article was received better by the students because the vocabulary was easier and it depicted topics, such as e-kool, which were closer to the students' everyday lives, confirming the fact that materials used in the classroom should be in correspondence with what might be of interest to the students as well as in accordance with their existing language skills.

The section of tasks based on Tamkivi's article started with an introductory task, in which students were asked to answer a few questions about their own ID-cards and services for which the ID-card can be used in order to give the otherwise formal topic a more personal dimension because Cullen and Sato (2000: para. 22) have pointed out that students always enjoy talking about themselves, therefore it was used to create a friendlier atmosphere in the classroom. All of the students owned an ID-card and they mainly said that they had needed it for travelling. Of all the possibilities of the ID-card usage, travelling was given as the most obvious option. The next choice was identifying oneself and some had added, "when buying cigarettes or alcohol". Only a few students mentioned that the ID-card can also be used for logging into webpages, for example, online banking. It is worth noting that some students failed to use the phrase 'log into' and instead replaced it with 'go into', for example, "go into internet bank", although the phrase should be familiar to them from numerous webpages.

Tamkivi's article itself was accompanied by a selection of true/false statements based on the text to ensure that students go through the text properly and develop their reading skills. This is one of the task types which is widely used in *I Love English* textbooks and therefore familiar to the students. The questions in the t/f task, which was done at home after reading the text in the classroom, were a matter of reading the text carefully and did not pose the students any difficulties. The text was followed by a gap-filling exercise: some phrases in the text were written in bold and they had to fit the gaps.

The key to completing this task successfully was understanding the meaning of the phrases from the text, as in the task, the phrases needed to be placed in the context of different sentences. Over the course of the lesson it became clear that the gap-filling exercise should have been left as a homework and checked in the next lesson as it would have given the students, who require more time when completing tasks, the chance to work on it in their own pace instead of rushing them through the text. The expressions in bold were included in the vocabulary test and thus had to be learnt by heart by the students.

The next task in this section concerns ID-codes. As Tamkivi's article provided an example analysing ID-codes in terms of the meaning of the different numbers, it was decided to give the students a chance to do something more practical and analyse their own ID-codes following the example of the article. The teacher provided each student with a printout of their ID-code and asked them to take it apart number by number. As an additional example, the teacher did the same with her own code on the blackboard. This task proved to be popular with the students as most of them were not aware of the fact that ID-code meant anything – they considered it to be a random array of numbers. The students also had to ask their parents how they used their ID-cards or Mobile-ID's. These answers brought forward more web-based services than the students' own examples, suggesting that at least while in basic school, students do not use their own ID-cards as much, rather opting for their student cards but the need to use them increases when they reach adulthood and start voting and managing their own finances. This indicates that their involvement in e-state systems is limited, which could also explain why so few of them came upon the idea of describing Estonia as an e-state in the introductory task.

The last task based on Tamkivi's article featured questions concerning the article and was once again left as a homework and discussed in the next class due to lack of time. The three questions tried to draw the students' attention on the type of the text as well as

the main idea behind the article. Most of the students managed to conclude that it was taken from a newspaper, therefore an article and the students also noticed that the article was written by an Estonian. However, surprisingly few students managed to identify which type of lessons were referred to in the title of the article. Most common answers were "ID is good", "other countries don't have ID-cards" and "ID-codes are interesting". Only ten students brought out that the aforementioned lessons could refer to Estonia's development in the IT-area and out of the ten, only two successfully wrote that the most important aspect was not the developments per se, but "the mindset" oriented towards development. It may be suggested that despite the fact that the text was read and translated in the classroom, it remained distant and complicated for the students language-wise as it featured complicated and unfamiliar vocabulary on topics which usually do not concern them, thus hindering their understanding of the article. This, in turn, shows the possibility that Tamkivi's article may not have been the ideal choice to include in the teaching materials or should have been extensively adapted to make it more manageable for the students.

Tim Mansel's article serves as the basis for the next section of tasks. His article also focuses on the IT-advancements in Estonia, but he writes about encouraging IT-education in schools as well as discussing the many benefits of e-Kool and Estonian start-ups (Skype as the most widely recognised and Frostnova as a successful newcomer). The reading of the text was preceded by a class discussion concerning the students' own computer usage acting as a warm-up activity: how old they were when they first used a computer, what do they usually do in their computer classes at school and also enquires whether the students only use Stuudium (the version of eKool used this basic school) or do they also use a traditional paper diary. The discussion revealed that the average age of using a computer (keeping in mind that these students were born in the years 1997-2001) was about five

years. The youngest age brought out was three and the oldest was seven. The discussion also outlined that students consider their computer classes extremely boring as they mainly focus on MS Office programs. They also found the classes to be too theoretical. When asked, what they would like to do in their computer classes, they mentioned programming, web design and photoshopping. All of the students used Stuudium and about half of them also had a notebook or a diary, where they wrote down their homeworks, but they admitted that it was mostly a habit (it is compulsory to use a diary for the first six grades). Students participated in the discussion quite actively, using the questions to share their own experiences, verifying Cullen and Sato's (2000) idea that students indeed enjoy talking about themselves, even in a foreign language.

The article is followed by a vocabulary task – find, write and learn. Once again, this task type is featured in nearly all of the units in *I Love English* textbooks and therefore very familiar to the students, requiring no further explanations or instructions by the teacher. Estonian equivalents of certain words and phrases from the text are provided and the student has to re-read the text and find the same word in English. As the text was read and translated during the lesson with the whole class, this task was left as a homework and did not prove to be difficult for the students. The author of this thesis believes that though this task was found tedious by the students, it helped them firstly with working through the text independently and secondly, with revising the new vocabulary.

The next task is a reading task: comprehension questions concerning the text. Since with the previous article students had difficulties with the comprehension questions, it was decided that they should be answered in groups of three or four where the students could combine their ideas. The questions were more oriented towards the specific article and did not require an elaborate discussion. Students also did not fail to point out that the article tells the truth in the sense that they do not have any excuses for not doing their homework

as well as the fact that their parents check their grades every night, bringing those out as cons from the students perspective while agreeing with the article that from the parents' and teachers' perspective they are benefits.

The last task based on Mansel's article is a bit more creative and was also done in groups of four. The task is inspired by Frostnova's computer game introduced in the article and asks the students to imagine that they would need to design a computer game for children introducing any aspect of Estonia and describe the game in the form of a short essay. There were some interesting ideas and some of them will be described more closely. One group decided upon a war game introducing Estonian history through wars and conquests. The aim of the game, according to students, would be to "show that history can be cool, too". In their description, they managed to include an impressive amount of vocabulary related to warfare and weapons, even such complicated words as 'infantry', 'troops', 'siege' while they still failed to make a distinction between 'their' and 'there' in their writing. When the teacher enquired about the use of such elaborate vocabulary, the students in the group (all boys) revealed that they had picked up those words from a computer game they all play. Another more detailed idea for the computer game focused on different counties of Estonia – drawing the patterns that are used in folk costumes, translating sayings into English and also building homes characteristic to that area of Estonia. One of the groups focused on "nature works", such as milking, planting, weeding and baking bread. As this task required that the students describe their game in English, it was also the chance to check whether they would incorporate any of the new vocabulary or previously learnt vocabulary concerning Estonian culture. The students had put into active use vocabulary from the introductory tasks relating to Estonian traditional foods as well as song and dance festivals. Moreover, in groups they included many Estonian symbols in English, such as limestone, cornflower and barn swallow without the help of dictionaries,

showing that in groups they managed to express their ideas in English more accurately than individually.

Task five was a conclusive task as it summarised the video advertisement and the two articles. This required the students to go over the materials once again and try to synthesize the snippets of knowledge into a coherent whole. As is known to the author of this thesis, a number of teachers in this basic school use summarising as a good method for introducing new material as it makes sure that the students have worked with the text and found the most important information because a large number of students do not bother to take notes in classes. The Curriculum also suggests that writing short summaries is a suitable task in the third stage of basic school (Vabariigi valitsuse... lisa 2: 10). The students were given four subheadings under which they needed to summarise with a few sentences what they had learnt from the two articles, the video and class discussions. This task proved to be very difficult for the students who had not previously participated in the discussion or read the texts due to being absent or simply not working along in the classroom in the previous lessons, not to mention that they also needed to catch up with translating the vocabulary in the word list provided by the teacher at the beginning of the trial teaching round. As they had to work with the texts on their own, their summaries remained superficial and they had merely rewritten random sentences from the articles under the corresponding titles. As for the students who had worked along in the classroom, their summaries were more thorough, though still shorter than expected after all of the material had been analysed. On the other hand, they had synthesized all of the required sources, including information and ideas from the video (for example, widespread wi-fi in Estonia was pointed to in the video), indicating that active participation in-class as well as doing homeworks notably enhances analytical skills and the ability to put new vocabulary into active use.

It can be concluded that the students valued practical tasks, such as taking apart ID-codes and game design more than discussion-oriented tasks. It also surfaced that while the students did well in reading tasks, which were familiar to them (t/f statements, comprehension questions), they did not do equally well in the summarising task as they are not used to working on more than one text at once, not to mention trying to combine different texts into one. Overall, Tamkivi's article did not meet Redmond's requirement of enjoyment as the topic concerning online voting was not of interest to the students and when it comes to Cullen and Sato's suggestion of choosing the text according to the level of the students, it remained too difficult language-wise. Mansel's article, on the other hand, depicted topics of more interest to the students and therefore got a better response as it allowed the students to talk about their own computer classes and their own habits, thus using the language they already have and feel comfortable with.

2.3.3 Tasks based on blog entries

The last set of tasks revolved around Justin Petrone's blog. He is an American Italian journalist and writer, who has been living in Estonia since 2002 and since 2005, he has been writing a blog⁶, in which he describes his daily life as well as the current political situation and topical issues in Estonia. The students were given three short excerpts from three different blog entries, which contrasted the extremes of life in Estonia, depicting the everyday life conditions of many Estonians as well as the economic success story of Estonia as a Nordic country. The aim of this section was to add an additional type of media – blog – to the lesson plan as well as show the students that the same topic – E-stonia – can be shown from different angles to enable cross-media comparison as well as the needed moment of contrast in values education. Moreover, the blog entries also give an outsider's

⁶ www.palun.blogspot.com

inside view of Estonia – when previously students as Estonians had to imagine themselves as foreigners, then now they had the opportunity to read about an actual foreigner's inside view of Estonia. Though from a blog, the entries were not easy language-wise, featuring a number of words unfamiliar for the students, thus the excerpts were read and translated in the classroom to make the process and tasks easier for the students.

The blog entries were followed by a vocabulary task which required the students to find certain words from the text, translate them into Estonian and also identify the word type in order to revise their previous language topic (word formation). To help the students put the new words into active use, they were also asked to write five example sentences of their own using five words of their own choosing. Deskmates then swapped their handouts and corrected their neighbour's sentences if necessary. Later on students' own sentences were included in the final vocabulary test as translation sentences.

The last task of the set based on blog entries focused on blogs and blogging more generally by asking students to answer four questions: whether they know what the word 'blog'⁷ means; do they follow any blogs or have a blog of their own; what could be the motivation behind blogging and lastly, how do newspaper articles and blogs differ and which they enjoyed more. None of the students knew the origin of the word 'blog' and none of the boys admitted to having or following any blogs. Girls, on the other hand, mostly follow fashion blogs and three students have a blog of their own. When comparing blogs and articles, students brought out that "blogs are more honest", "articles are boring", "in blogs you can say what you want and you can swear", showing that they perceive the difference between formal and informal writing styles as well as displaying their appreciation of the honesty that comes with blogging. More difficult, however, was the question why people start blogging in the first place – identifying the motive behind

⁷ Blog – shortening of the word weblog <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/blog?s=t>

creating these pieces of writing. Most of the answers can be summarised as "because they are bored and want others to see how awesome they are", classifying blogging as bragging. Only one student said that some people also make money with blogging and blogging can be used to advertise oneself. Another student commented that blogging is "good for your writing", implying that the process of writing a blog, especially when done in a foreign language, can help to improve your language skills.

It can be claimed that in terms of media analysis, students were more successful in establishing the motives behind the creation of *Welcome to Estonia* materials as well as both of the newspaper articles than in finding the motive behind blogging. However, class discussion revealed that students enjoyed reading the blog entries despite the unorthodox vocabulary because they were funny, clever, and above all, truthful as the students appreciated the ironic approach to the two extremely different images of the reality of daily life Estonia. More time should have been spent on the aspect of values education because it seemed that the blog entries, as they are the last set of tasks in the lesson plan, presented the comparison of two different Estonias in a manner clearest to the students. In order to concentrate the students' attention on the depiction of the two different Estonias there should have been a separate task as it could have given the students a more systematised overview of the blog entries as well as the lesson plan as a whole.

2.3.4 Final task: writing an e-mail

The final and the most challenging task for the students was writing an e-mail based on a task given to them. It also made up 50% of their final grade given to the students for completing the lesson plan. The Curriculum outlines that writing personal letters is a suitable task in the third stage of basic school (Vabariigi Valitsuse määrus 2011, lisa 2: 10). Letter-writing involves a certain amount of creativity while allowing the student to

demonstrate their language skills and understanding of the task. During the earlier stages of compiling the lesson plan the final evaluation was supposed to be in the form of a letter as letter-writing is prominently featured in *I Love English* textbooks for grades eight and nine and it is also one of the 9th grade English national examination tasks. However, as the aim of the lesson plan was to open up students to new experiences, the format of an e-mail was chosen as it can also be seen as belonging to the area of media education.

The aim of the longer writing task was to see how much students have acquired throughout the course of the four lessons and whether their views on culture have changed in any way when compared to the introductory tasks on the lesson plan. The students were also expected to incorporate new vocabulary into their e-mail, but this was not explicitly brought out in the task description to prevent the students from focusing only on the linguistic aspect of the task. The format of an e-mail also enabled students to put themselves in an imaginary situation and since they needed to create a coherent piece of writing, they had to review the handout and the material of the past four lessons, therefore revising the materials once again. Additionally, as the author's previous experiences have indicated, students tend to be more loose with spelling, grammar and format when it comes to writing formal messages online (for example, in their messages to their teachers in Stuudium, the form of e-school this basic school uses) or e-mails. Thus, it also proved to be a valuable chance to remind the students that all of the language rules still apply, even when the text they are writing does not require paper or is not written in a classroom.

The task itself asked the students to imagine that their family was going to host an exchange student from the US. The exchange student's knowledge of Estonia and Estonian culture was described as stereotypical and shallow. The students had to describe their own daily lives as teenagers as well as Estonian traditions and aspects of Estonian life what could be surprising to a foreigner. It was hoped that students would successfully integrate

the experience from the past four lessons into their letter as well as put the new vocabulary into active use. The students received a grade for the language and format of the letter as well as the content being in overall accordance with the task. They were not graded, however, based on how much material relating to values education from the lesson plan they would include.

In terms of the language aspect, it can be said that generally the students followed the task rather carefully. Only ten of the students ignored the fact that they were asked to write an e-mail of 120 words and instead wrote a short message of only 50-60 words. Nearly all of the students employed the openings and endings proper to a personal letter. New vocabulary was featured in nearly all of the letters, despite not being explicitly brought out in the prompt as a separate requirement for the e-mail. Moreover, the students were also quite careful with the spelling and the amount of spelling mistakes, the use of smiley faces and slang (SWAG, tho, LMAO, FML) was more comparable to a traditional letter written on paper than the usual style of their Stuudium messages. Therefore, it could be said that the media education aspect of the task succeeded as well – majority of the students realised that an e-mail has to follow the general format of a personal letter and attention to spelling and grammar must be paid there as well. Thus, it could be said that most of the students acquired the practical skills – they actively used the new vocabulary and formatted their e-mails correctly.

From the values education aspect, however, the e-mail was not as successful as it was hoped to be. The results may have been better if the e-mail had been written in-class where students would have spent more time on the task than they did at home. The main problem that surfaced was that students followed the task and introduced their homeland and culture, but did not integrate much of the new knowledge gained over the past four lessons, except for a passing mention of free public wi-fi by a few students. The situation is

similar to what occurred in the media education course mentioned in Hindrikson's thesis (p. 22) – students seemed to acquire the knowledge over the course, but failed to put it into active use. It could be claimed that the students only focused on the unfamiliar format of grading – writing an e-mail instead of the usual letter or short essay – and concentrated on language and formatting, perceiving it to be the most important aspect of the task as it was done in an English lesson. This could indicate that the integration of media education and learning English in a communicative context was achieved, but the integration of values education with these topics was not completely achieved at the expected level.

CONCLUSION

The Estonian National Curriculum for basic schools, which sets the requirements for compulsory education in Estonia, aims to ensure that by the end of basic school students would have not only subject knowledge, but also competences that would help their development as an independent person and a responsible citizen capable of contributing to the society. The objective of the integration of different school subjects, general competences and cross-curricular themes is to design the student's knowledge and identity development into a coherent whole, in which the topics discussed in the classroom would support student's identity development and vice versa, the student's development as a person would add to their academic knowledge. This requires that all teachers actively and knowingly address those topics in their subject lessons and find ways to teach them through their subject without in any way limiting the students' subject knowledge as students are finally still graded based only on their subject field knowledge. It appears, however, to be a challenge to equally address all of the aspects of the Curriculum within the limited amount of contact hours attributed by the Curriculum.

The aim of this thesis was to explore the possibilities of including media education and values education in basic school subject lessons, more specifically EFL classes, therefore balancing cross-curricular themes and general competences with subject field competences. Ugur (2004) found that language lessons are the most open in terms of discussing different topics and using a wide range of materials for teaching, with Raudsep (2010) pointing out that foreign language learning benefits from authentic materials greatly. In this thesis, a lesson plan employing authentic media materials and dealing with the depiction of the image of Estonia was created and tried out on a group of students. Linguistic emphasis was on learning new vocabulary and practicing writing an e-mail

(following the format of an informal letter) to a friend as well as improving the students' analytical reading skills, hence combining media education, culture as a part of values education and learning English as a foreign language. The process of compiling and teaching the lesson plan in the trial teaching round brought to attention its more successful parts as well as its shortcomings.

As was explained in the section discussing the process of compiling the lesson plan, the main challenges were finding suitable media texts to include in the lesson plan as well as deciding how to approach the topics. The texts had to represent the target values of the lesson plan. Suggestions made by Hobbs, Fuxa and Cullen and Sato were taken into account when choosing the texts and the suitable approach. Hobbs (2010) claimed that different approaches to media education should be balanced to achieve effective learning, similarly to Fuxa (2012) who opted for providing students with a certain amount of pre-approved texts. While the values considered the most important are listed in the Curriculum, there are always different angles from which to introduce the topic and this is where the teacher actually decides on the approach they are going to pursue – whether they introduce the values represented in the media text as the only ones accepted or do they offer a choice between multiple possibilities. For the purposes of the current lesson plan, multiple texts were chosen to ensure that students have the chance to compare different texts. Additionally, Cullen and Sato (2000) stressed that the texts selected for classes should be in accordance with the language level. The source texts used in the lesson plan compiled for this thesis, especially Sten Tamkivi's article, proved to be somewhat difficult for the students, even in the shortened form. Thus, it can be claimed that out of the three sets of texts, two sets, the blog entries and Tim Mansel's article met the requirements of difficulty and were found enjoyable by the students.

According to the Curriculum, students should become aware, tolerant and open-minded citizens, capable of finding their own way in the information society. Media education proposes that the students should be equipped with a set of analytical skills to tackle the overflow of information. Values education foresees that the students' value systems should be shaped in the mutual cooperation of educational facilities and homes. As became apparent in this thesis, the teacher's role on the one hand is not to tell the students what to think or how to approach certain topics in order to give them the maximum amount of freedom in making their own decisions. At the same time, the teacher needs to be able to reflect on the preferred values and guide the students towards them. For the purposes of the current lesson plan, it was decided that students should be given the chance to compare and contrast their pre-conceived values with the ones represented in the texts and later discussed during the lessons. It was hoped that through that process students would see the benefits of both aspects of the values, the traditional as well as the more modern. Cullen and Sato (2000) pointed out that culture is not a fixed phenomenon, but a process, similarly to media education. Taking into account that the aim of the cross-curricular themes and general competences is to support student's natural development, the decision was made not to force the students to learn the values represented in the text, but to see whether they would be able to acquire them without that, naturally, as was suggested by Saart (2013).

The analysis of the final task of the lesson plan, writing an e-mail, however, suggested that at least on the basic school level, students would need more specific guidelines than were provided by their teacher as they focused only on what was already familiar to them, namely the aspect of the English language - the format of the letter as well as vocabulary and spelling. In terms of content, on their own they did not see the necessary connection between the final task and the aim of the lesson plan of introducing

multiple layers of presenting one culture, relying only on their previous knowledge of their own culture in their writing and not integrating new knowledge as was expected.

The Curriculum foresees that general competences, cross-curricular themes and subject field competences be addressed throughout the course of basic school, but students are generally graded only according to subject field competences. Ugur (2004) stresses two problems with the measurement and assessment of general competences, noting the issue of measuring whether the competency was acquired or not, and secondly, contemplating whether it is possible to give students grades for such tasks. Thus, they are usually not graded and ideally, each student's personal development should be monitored and taken into account. This, however, requires work and time from the teacher. In the case of the current lesson plan, four lessons was nearly not enough time to adequately address all the topics and tasks of the lesson plan, so it became clear that the lesson plan was too multifaceted. The students were not able to pay attention to all of the three aspects: values education presented through culture, media education through different media texts and the English language, presenting the best results in the language-oriented aspects for which they received grades. While the word test that was compiled on the basis of the lesson checked and graded whether the students had acquired the vocabulary and e-mail writing focused on revising the writing of a personal letter, the values and media aspects of the lesson plan were not given grades. As both media education and values education are longer processes, students' development should be observed individually over a longer period of time. It could be that the results of the lesson plan had been better if only two aspects had been chosen, for example combining values education and English or media education and English, giving the lesson plan a clearer focus.

On the other hand, the e-mails written by the students in the final task revealed that, though not incorporating the target values, as a result of the trial round of the lesson plan

the students acknowledged that there indeed are certain stereotypes concerning Estonian culture that they have internalized, for example, concerning Estonian cuisine. One of the students wrote "We don't eat blood sausage every day and I don't like sült, I like pizza", showing that according to her concept of Estonian traditional foods it seems to foreigners that Estonians eat them every single day. In addition to the values education aspect, based on the results of the e-mail, it could be said that students had the chance to improve their writing skills in a new context – in an e-mail instead of a letter – and thus learn English and develop their communication skills in a new setting of educational online communication.

Pille Valk (2005) writes that no education is free of values education. In the context of today's information-filled world, where media literacy and media education are gaining more and more importance, it could be claimed that neither should media education be absent from education. As Ugur (2010) stresses, media education is in focus on the regulatory level, but not implemented according to these requirements. The trial teaching round and the following analysis of the lesson plan showed that media education as well as values education require longer periods of time than a few lessons – as the Curriculum envisions, they need to be constant processes to ensure that the values and media skills being forwarded would be integrated in the students' knowledge to the extent that would allow them to put them into active use after they finish school. It can be concluded that balancing subject and general competences of the Curriculum in the classroom is not easy and requires pre-planning by the teacher if the aim is to knowingly address those issues without paying less attention to developing students' subject field competences. However, the analysis of the current lesson plan showed that the process of including the requirements of the Curriculum in EFL classes provides the students a chance to work with non-textbook materials, which, in turn, creates a situation where they can use their

language skills in a communicative setting, thus fulfilling one of the main aims of foreign language learning in the first place – to enable communication. It also became apparent from the analysis that students are more likely to participate and speak up when they feel confident about the vocabulary and language they use, so it is useful to pay special attention to vocabulary to ensure that the students' participation is not hindered by the words they do not understand.

From the teacher's perspective, it can be said that, since creating a friendly atmosphere in the classroom is essential for two-way communication, it is important to include introductory and lead-in tasks, which would give the students a chance to talk about themselves and their experiences in order to show them that their input is valued. Moreover, this also gives an EFL teacher necessary information about the students' language level: whether they feel confident with the vocabulary and language structures they need to use to express their ideas or should they be reviewed to enable students to communicate more freely. Students also appreciated the tasks that featured a practical purpose, such as analysing ID-codes or designing an imaginary computer game, which brought variety to activities based on discussion. Moreover, such tasks create closer ties with life outside the classroom, enabling integration of formal education and daily life, and, as was stressed by Ugur (2004), giving the students the skills to cope with similar messages and situations in the future instead of getting them to understand only the particular messages.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1

LESSON PLAN

1. Lead-in. Pre-watching

Imagine that you would need to give a small talk about Estonia to a person who has never been here. How would you describe our country? Think about our nature, culture and your own daily life. Put down some keywords:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

<http://www.okia.ee/blog/2010/01/welcome-to-estonia/>

Take a look at the picture on the right and take some notes about the following questions.

Have you seen this logo before?

Where?

Why do you think this logo was designed?

Was it made by Estonians or by people outside of Estonia?



2. Watch the following video introducing Estonia. You will notice that the video uses keywords as well as video shots to describe Estonia. Try to write down as many of the keywords as you can and then answer the questions based on what you saw.

<http://brand.estonia.eu/en/>

2.1 Write your keywords here:

2.2 Work in groups. In groups of three or four, try to translate the keywords into Estonian:

2.3 In the same groups, discuss the following questions and take some notes:

Take a look at the keywords you and your groupmates have written. What do they say about Estonia as a country?

What impression do you get?

Why do you think such shots of Estonia were combined with such keywords?

Why do you think this video was made in the first place? By whom and to whom it could be made?

Why do you think Estonia is called “positively surprising” at the end of the video?

2.4 You are a tourist who is about to visit Estonia for the first time and happen to see this video before your trip. Based on that video, what kind of impression do you think a foreigner could get about Estonia? Write 3-5 sentences.

3. Pre-reading. Discuss with your deskmate. Take notes.

Do you have an ID-card?

When did you get it and how often have you had to use it?

For which services can people in Estonia use their ID-cards or mobile IDs? Together with your deskmate, list the options here:

3a. Read the following text and select the suitable option (circle the correct answer). T- true, F – false.

1. The first building block of e-governments is for each citizen to have several separate numbers such as social security number and taxpayer number. T F
2. When your ID-code is 34004174219, you are a man born in 1940 on the third of May. T F
3. You always have to give both, your electronical signature and your signature on paper. T F
4. Every person above 15 must have an ID-card. T F
5. You can also use your mobile phone to sign if you have a Mobile-ID. T F
6. Online voting in Estonia was first allowed in 2008. T F
7. The author of the article voted from the USA. T F

Lessons from the World's Most Tech-Savvy Government

By Sten Tamkivi

Link to the full text: <http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2014/01/lessons-from-the-worlds-most-tech-savvy-government/283341/>

3b. Fill in the gaps with phrases in bold from the text.

1. John and Jack are identical twins. Even their own mother cannot them
2. Luckily, the mistake was and corrected.
3. Warm countries, such as Egypt, many Estonian tourists in winter.
4. When you are tired of visiting different stores, you can nowadays order most of the goods
5. Mary and Tim wanted to buy a house, so they to take a loan from the bank.
6. 69 in Estonia are Estonians.
7. My mother's washing machine broke down last week, so she needs my help a new one.
8. Who is your? Elisa, Tele2 or EMT?
9. 24th of February, the Independence Day of Estonia, is a celebration in Estonia.

3c. Take a look at your own ID code and write out the numbers that mean the following:

Gender:

Date of birth:

Out of all the children born on that day, what was your number?:

Checksum number:

Did you know what your ID-code meant before you read it in the text? Ask your parents how often and for what they use their ID-cards or Mobile-ID. Take notes here:

3.d Comprehension questions. Go through the text again and answer the following questions.

1. The title of the article refers to "lessons". What kind of lessons could the Estonian government teach to other countries?
2. Was the article written by an Estonian or a foreigner?
3. Where do you think this text was taken from? What kind of a text is it?

4. Pre-reading. Brief discussion on the following topics:

Do you remember the first time you used a computer? How old were you?

What do you usually do in your computer classes?

Do you use eKool (Stuudium) every day or do you still use a diary?

Take a look at the title of the article. Have you ever heard the expression *e-riik*? What do you think it could mean? Read the following text.

How Estonia became E-stonia

By Tim Mansel

Link to the full text: <http://www.bbc.com/news/business-22317297>

4. a Find, write and learn.

1. Nõukogude liit -
2. Pärusmaa -
3. sõltuv -
4. suursaadik -
5. põlvkond -
6. uuendus, täiendus -
7. iseseisvus -
8. eesmärk -
9. ülemaailmne -
10. peakorter -
11. töøjõud -
12. (arsti)retsept -
13. apteek -
14. millelgi põhinema -
15. kohalik -
16. disainimine -

4. b Comprehension questions – answer the questions and underline/highlight the place in the text where you found the answer.

1. When do children start to learn programming in some Estonian schools?

2. What skills does programming help to develop?

3. What can the players do in Frostnova's computer game and why was this game created?

4. How does eKool make the lives of students and parents easier?

4. c Imagine that you would need to design a computer game oriented towards children to teach them about Estonia (geography, culture, literature, history, food, daily life etc). What kind of a game would it be? Think about the characters and activities that the children could do in the game. Write about 5-10 sentences.

5. Now you have seen a video introducing Estonia and have read two texts about digital services in Estonia. These articles were written for newspapers. Your task is to sum up the two articles into one, using the subheadings given to you. Write about 2-3 sentences under each heading.

1. Telling citizens apart

2. Online schools

3. Voting online

4. Estonian start-ups

6. Justin is an Italian American who has been living in Estonia since 2002. He has an Estonian wife, Epp and they have three daughters. Since 2005 he has been writing a

blog called *Itching for Eestimaa* (palun.blogspot.com) about his experiences in Estonia.

Link to the full text:

<http://palun.blogspot.com/search?q=toilet>

Link to the full text:

<http://palun.blogspot.com/2013/07/the-town-and-country.html>

Link to the full text:

<http://palun.blogspot.com/2006/11/estonia-newest-nordic-entrepreneur.html>

6.1 Vocabulary task

Find and underline/highlight these words in the article. Translate them into Estonian and write what kind of a word is it – a noun (nimisõna), an adjective (omadussõna) or a verb (tegusõna). First try to guess based on the text, and only then use a dictionary.

Words:

Recall –
Apartment –
Meagre –
Dwelling –
Remodel –
Gorgeous –
Feral –
Cash –
Quaint –
Squat –
Entrepreneur –
Unemployed –
Hazard –
Plumbing –
Colony –
Investment –

Choose 5 of them and use them in sentences of your own. Write your sentences here:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

6.2 The two previous texts we read were newspaper articles. This is a blog entry. Do you know what a blog is?

Write your answer here:

Do you read any blogs or do you have a blog of your own?

Why do you think people start blogging in the first place?

How are the two newspaper articles and this blog entry different? Which was more enjoyable or easier to read?

Final assessment task:

Writing an e-mail/a letter.

Your family is going to host an exchange student, Timmy, from the United States. Unfortunately, he does not know much about Estonia – he only knows that the weather is mostly cold, it is somewhere in the distant corner of Europe near Russia and has beautiful nature. He is a bit scared of coming here because he does not know what our daily life looks like. Keeping in mind what we have talked about the past lessons, write to him and describe living in Estonia. Try to write about both: about what is traditional in our lives and what is new and surprising. Write about 120 words.

RESÜMEE

TARTU ÜLIKOOL
INGLISE FILOLOOGIA OSAKOND

Hedy Lepik

Values education through media education in EFL classroom in forms 8-9

(Väärtuskasvatus läbi meediakasvatuse inglise keele tunnis 8-9 klassis)

Magistritöö

2014

Lehekülgede arv: 78

Annotatsioon:

Käesoleva magistritöö eesmärgiks on uurida võimalusi põhikooli riikliku õppekava nõuete järgimiseks inglise keele kui võõrkeeles tunnis ning luua tunnikava, mis keskenduks õppekavas esitatud läbivatele teemadele ja üldpädevustele. Tunnikava keskendub meediakasvatusele ja väärtuskasvatusele ning nende võimalikule kombineerimisele inglise keele õppega.

Töö koosneb sissejuhatusest, kahest peatükist ja kokkuvõttest. Töö sissejuhatuses antakse lühiülevaade riikliku õppekava nõuetest ja meediakasvatuse ja väärtuskasvatuse rollist õppekavas. Sissejuhatuses tutvustatakse ka tunnikava koostamise põhjuseid.

Töö teoreetilises osas käsitletakse laiemalt õppekava läbivaid teemasid ning üldpädevusi. Lisaks sellele keskendub teoreetiline peatükk põhjalikumalt ka meediakasvatuse ja väärtuskasvatuse rollile ja taustale.

Töö empiiriline osa käsitleb endas põhimõtteid, mida kasutati tunnikava loomisel. Peale selle tegeleb empiiriline osa ka sihtrühma õpilaste tutvustamisega, kellele tunnikava läbi õpetati ning tunnikava ja katse-õpetamise analüüs.

Tunnikava analüüs näitas, et õpilased ei suutnud võrdselt tähelepanu pöörata kõigile kolmele tunnikava aspektile: meediakasvatusele, väärtuskasvatusele ja inglise keelele. Kõige paremad tulemused saavutati inglise keele tasemel, mis oli ka ainuke konkreetselt hinnatav tunnikava aspekt. Meediakasvatuse ja väärtuskasvatuse aspektide eest õpilased hindeid ei saanud, sest antud tunnikava läbiõpetamise periood oli liialt lühike järelduste tegemiseks, kuna riiklik õppekava näeb ette, et õppekava läbivaid teemasid ja üldpädevusi arendatakse kogu põhikooliõppe kestel.

Märksõnad: meediakasvatus, väärtuskasvatus, inglise keele kui võõrkeeles õpetamine

Lihtlitsents lõputöö reprodutseerimiseks ja lõputöö üldsusele kättesaadavaks tegemiseks

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 (sünnikuupäev: _____ 25.12.1986 _____)

1. annan Tartu Ülikoolile tasuta loa (lihtlitsentsi) enda loodud teose

Values education through media education in EFL classroom in forms 8-9
 (lõputöö pealkiri)

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- 1.1. reprodutseerimiseks säilitamise ja üldsusele kättesaadavaks tegemise eesmärgil, sealhulgas digitaalarhiivi DSpace-is lisamise eesmärgil kuni autoriõiguse kehtivuse tähtaja lõppemiseni;
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Tartus/Tallinnas/Narvas/Pärnus/Viljandis, ____16.05.2014____ (kuupäev)