

PUBLIC SERVICE TELEVISION AS EDUCATION

FACTUAL PROGRAMMES AND THE MEDIA AND INFORMATION LITERACY (MIL) POLICY DISCOURSE

Maarit Jaakkola
University of Gothenburg
maarit.jaakkola@gu.se

Marjaana Mykkänen
Independent researcher
marjaana.mykkanen@gmail.com

Abstract: This article examines factual programmes in public service television as a specific means of education, exploring and underscoring its educational function within the framework of media and information literacy (MIL) policy discourse. Factual programming forms a multi-stakeholder genre category that has gained relevance in times of democratic insecurities. It traditionally presents a source for cultivating cultural citizenship crucial to democracy but has been less explicitly examined as a source for advancing media education and literacy. In the context of Finland, which has been considered a forerunner both in its educational and media educational system, we inquire into the MIL dimensions of some of the newest multi-platform productions conducted in factual television. The results cast more light on the genre of factual programming and its underlying educational objectives, which paves way for further research on the MIL governance. The analysis also raises questions about their strategic relevance and future development in public broadcasters' programming content.

Keywords: factual programmes, factual television, genre, media and information literacy (MIL), media education, Finland, Yle

1 Introduction

Media, including television, exerts an important educational function with wide outreach in society. Indeed, in the traditions of media and television studies, television has frequently been seen as a source of formal and informal learning.¹ However, media organizations and their content producers do not typically conceive of themselves as educators, teachers or pedagogues, and even the academic discourse on 'televisual pedagogies' is more typically focused on consumption cultures than their learning functions.²

This article examines television as a provider of education and educational content by dealing with a specific genre, factual programmes, in public service television as media education by placing it into the nascent global policy

discourse of media and information literacy (MIL).³ We ask if factual programmes, a broad category ranging from news to documentaries and from educational programmes to lifestyle programmes, can be conceptualized as (media) educational content and how the educative mission connects to the specificities of the genre as well as strategies of public service media (PSM) and media education. With an intention to advance genre-focused inquiry into television, we depart from the observation that factual programmes, which – with an exception to news – form an under-researched genre so far. Yet they constitute a genre that covers a wide range of topics from explicitly educational programmes to science and cultural programmes, with an overarching intent to inform, educate and entertain informed audiences, and, thus essentially include an educational intent, resonating with and implementing public broadcaster's mission to advance education and national media education. Our examination is limited to the educational ecosystem of one country, Finland, which, as a Nordic country, subscribes to a tradition with strong PSM⁴ and a long tradition of media education.⁵ Characterized as a top-ranked education nation, the education system of which 'other countries can emulate'⁶ and a 'forerunner of media education,'⁷ Finland forms a good context for the discussion, as the country has, among few nation states in the world, a national media education policy, and has in this strategic document declared the ambition to become a global blueprint for media education policy and practice.⁸

By framing the factual programme genre – which is widely used as a working category at PSM companies, manifest in their organizational and programming structures – as educational activity of a media organization we hope to negotiate between different discourses and close a gap that can be seen in the policy-related frameworks of media (PSM, programming) and learning (MIL/media education). Cross-fertilizing the learning paradigms in different disciplinary approaches requires dovetailing of traditions and vocabularies of social and pedagogical sciences, an interdisciplinary nexus that media scholars have called for⁹ and which is more needed than ever for advancing media literacy research.¹⁰ Furthermore, by re-contextualizing factual television in the MIL framework we want to dedicate attention to the way educational potential may guide politics and make a case for further research. Developing the concepts and vocabulary to address factual television as such as a pedagogical force will unveil potential of a type of television content that has been under stress and even on the decrease during the latest decades, and facilitates to discover its relationship to the rapidly developing phenomenon of media and information literacy that is being seen as an urgent policy demand worldwide at the moment.

2 Research Objective

Our starting point in this theoretical paper is that television forms a resource for individual and communities to fulfill their 'factual needs' in different informal contexts, such as in their leisure time and at home, without any structured or shared agenda, while also establishing its position as part of the formal curricula, even becoming normalized to an extent that it is no longer separately discussed.¹¹ To address learning experiences with regard to television, we seek to identify PSM factual programmes as a MIL resource by asking how a conception of public education or pedagogy can be formed for PSM content within a changing media policy landscape where the discussion on media literacy has become increasingly prominent. Mainly based on theoretical inquiry, by using the Finnish PSM Yle as an illustrative case, we ask the following questions:

RQ1. How can factual television be conceptualized in relation to the MIL policy framework?

RQ2. How can factual television be regarded as MIL education?

RQ1 aims at looking at factual programmes through the lens of the MIL policy concept to advance the discussion television's relationship to forms of formal and informal learning promoted by public organisations. As Yle's recent strategy has focused on reaching out to younger audiences, RQ2 examines the role of the newer multi-channel productions in promoting educational aims, in particular media educational, localizing factual television of the PSM as part of the policy area of media and information literacy. To make our case, we will examine the central dimensions of the media pedagogies of factual programmes with examples.

Besides the fact that factual programming has typically remained in the shadow of studying news and news-oriented content in television, the factual content in PSM has rather seldom been systematically discussed in the context of media education and literacy. By making connections between and highlighting factual programmes as an educative genre we want to arrive at a more precise positioning of this genre category, which would pave the way for its further examination.

3 Factual Television as a Genre Category

Genre refers to established patterns in texts; genres are cultural categories that surpass the boundaries of media texts and operate as a tool of common understanding within producers and audiences.¹² Used as a classification tool to identify the basic functional character of a given text and to differ it from other potential alternatives, the genre works as an essential mediating component that makes communication between the reviewer, text and audiences possible,¹³ 'limiting the meaning-potential of a given text.'¹⁴ Genre typically works as a shared intuitive concept, an aggregation of linguistic patterns serving certain functions.¹⁵ Although genres have typically, even in socio-cultural theories, been examined with regard to texts and text characteristics, we suggest that we could see them as part of broader functional ecologies, in this case, of factual content, to understand what kind of place they occupy. A genre ecology such as the entity formed by factual television provides individuals engaged in informal learning processes with possibilities to get informed and educated about the world, about the others and themselves, as put forward by Hartley.¹⁶

Traditional groups of factual genres include news, current affairs and documentaries, and, more recently, reality programs.¹⁷ A general distinction has been made between news and current affairs as well as 'general feature.'¹⁸ Hill¹⁹ sub-categorizes the general feature content as follows: documentaries, investigative journalism programs, political programs, consumer programs, nature programs, documentary series, reconstructions, experiment programs, lifestyle programs, reality shows. The list should be complemented with at least science programs as well as arts and cultural programs.²⁰ However, the weakness of this definition, which works in the lack of any better one and has become the use theory of media organizations when talking about factual television, is that it mixes genre and style attributes (documentary, reconstruction, experiment, reality) with themes or topics (politics, nature, lifestyle). However, these genres are conventionally forming the genre ecology of the factual television. These (sub)genres are typically conceived of as owing kinship to each other and grouped together in media organizations. The educational function traverses across the genre repertoire, and the function is not restricted to or highlighted by centralizing it to an organizational unit as in the Nordics, for example, at the Swedish broadcasting company the Educational Radio (Utbildningsradion) lähde.

Nevertheless, the common denominator of factual genres is their 'direct' relationship to the 'reality' or society they are trying to represent, through their fact-basedness: their epistemological foundation leans upon facts and motivated reasoning, or things that are believed to be true, validated by professional practices and pertinent ideology, identity and occupational commitment by the practitioners involved and recruited by a media organization. Although employing narrative strategies and agendas that imply informed choices emphasizing some aspects while excluding others, the factual content is expected to be based on reality, as objectively perceived as possible. However, as the category of factual television is broad, the relationship to facts varies. In Figure 1, it is suggested that the factual genre ecology can be grouped at a very general level into four different categories: event-oriented (e.g. news), fact-oriented (e.g. feature programmes and documentaries), experience-oriented (e.g. arts programmes), and entertainment-oriented (e.g. reality) programme categories. Event-oriented genres such as news and current affairs are focused on mediating facts from occurrences defined as news events, while the fact-oriented genres are directed towards producing fact- and narrative-based storytelling and constructing worlds rather than reacting upon what has happened. A prototypical example of event-oriented genres is the news programme, which is based on a journalistic reaction upon what recently occurred and which can be considered newsworthy. Fact-oriented programmes extend the idea of strictly focusing on news events defined through news value to addressing phenomena and processes by hermeneutically developing the contextual understanding of these and increasing users' general resources and capabilities for absorbing new information and offer a wider kind of public connection.²¹ than news and current affairs do.

Experience-oriented programme genres focus on the meaning of world occurrences and the subjectivity of audiences to help viewers elaborate their understanding and worldviews broader than and detached from the solitary (news) events or fact-based phenomena. They most obviously have an educational function, providing viewers with substance knowledge to open up worlds that may not be known to them before. The epistemological foundations of experience-oriented genres range from fact-based to fictional means, allowing a wide variety of programme types to be included in this category. Entertainment-oriented programmes, which are the most distanced from fact-baseness, aim at diverting, engaging and amusing the audiences. In Figure 1, we have provided some examples of programme titles within these categories from the tableau of Yle's three public service channels (TV1, TV2, Teema) – on two news and one cultural programme channel – on a random day. The boundaries between the categories are blurry, and the dominant orientations characterizing a certain category, such as 'entertainment', do not exclude these traits within the other categories. Furthermore, hybrid categories such as info- or edutainment make the categories even more fluctuating, especially in transmedia productions where different genre categories may be simultaneously applied on different platforms.

	Event-oriented	Fact-oriented	Experience-oriented	Entertainment-oriented
Genre categories of factual television	News and current affairs	Documentary (political, nature), investigative journalism, consumer journalism	Arts/culture programming, adventure	Reality show, talk show, lifestyle programming
Examples from Yle1, YLE2 and Yle Teema's tableau on Thursday 27 January 2022	<i>Yle Uutiset</i> (in Finnish), <i>Oddasat</i> (in Sami), <i>Yle Nyheter</i> (in Swedish) <i>Yle Morning</i> , <i>A-Talk</i> , <i>Half Past Six</i> (news talk shows)	<i>Line Abroad: Afghanistan's Memory by Rauli Virtanen</i> (reportage) <i>The Forest Guardsmen, When Water Runs Out</i> (documentaries)	<i>Little Ch. Two</i> (children's programme) <i>Hiking in Island, Altai 30 päivässä</i> (adventure/wildlife/culture) <i>Meeri Koutaniemi, Unleashing Images</i> (artist's portrait)	<i>The Danish Farmer</i> (lifestyle) <i>Boys of Punkaharju, Female Soldiers</i> (reality)

Figure 1. Factual genre ecology with examples from Yle's programming (2021).

In her study on audience's relationship to factual genres, Mykkänen²² concludes that the general feature in factual television clearly serves for purposes of educating and developing oneself as an individual, gaining new perspectives to the world or discovering entirely new worlds. The consumption of the 'general feature' genre category is also very individual-centric. Instead of watching television with family or friends, factual genres are often consumed alone. The consumption of factual programmes strongly follows a person's own individual agenda and interests. Non-factual genres may also contribute to the same purpose, but the fact-baseness in factual content forms a tighter connection to the world described; the things described present real-world occurrences or have a connection to reality instead of being purely fictional. In this respect, all factual genres are in some way aimed at supporting an individual's life project, sustainment of a certain lifestyle with a certain kind of worldview guiding the interests, providing a sense of coherence. The support gained from factual communication may entail informative (as getting up-to-date through news feature), entertaining (as killing time through entertainment shows) or therapeutic (as in self-help) dimensions, but the common nominator is that the content provides a viewer with ingredients for self-support when constructing a conception of the world and oneself.

4 The MIL Framework

Citizens' abilities to deal with media are the most typically referred to with the terms media literacy, media and information literacy, and media competences.²³ These terms have developed into umbrella terms that are broken

down to more specific sets of skills such as news literacy,²⁴ film literacy, audiovisual literacy, visual literacy,²⁵ to name but a few – the list of different variants is long. Nevertheless, during the recent decades, a consensus has been formed concerning the definition of media and information literacy (MIL) as an overarching policy term, put forward by UNESCO.²⁶ MIL, the desired outcome of media education activities among and for the audiences, refers to the citizens' abilities to 'access, analyse, evaluate and create media in a variety of forms.'²⁷ This definition has become to guide national policies²⁸ and advocacy organizations,²⁹ but it has also found resonance even with research.³⁰ UNESCO-led policy guidelines for implementing MIL in different pedagogical contexts include handbooks for (and on) broadcasters and broadcasting professionals,³¹ journalism and journalism educators,³² media and communication practitioners,³³ and schools.³⁴ Furthermore, the MIL framework dovetails and resonates with other policy documents such as the European DIGCOMP framework for developing and understanding digital competence.³⁵

MIL thus forms a discursive framework that encompasses a variety of media types, contents, audiences and/or target groups and sites of learning, with a prominent perspective to advocate democracy and civic engagement. However, it has been criticized for its all-inclusivity; the macro-level approach has been regarded as lacking nuances, or to be seen to be aligned to solely 'good' aims and agency such as in promoting peace and justice education³⁶ and conceived of as a cure for everything, which Buckingham³⁷ criticizes for 'solutionism.' Despite its shortcomings, MIL has turned out to function as a macro-frame to address the pedagogical ecologies and their pertinent policy and infrastructural landscapes around media education within a country or region. The development of the concept has unfolded into three directions. First, the tight focus on 'media' has been questioned by adding new extensions to the core concept of 'media' literacy – not only 'media and information literacy' (MIL), but also 'media and information literacy expansion' (MIL^x),³⁸ 'media, information and digital literacy' (MIDL).³⁹ Second, the generality of the 'media' focus has been questioned, which has led either into rather focusing on individual subtypes with a tighter delimitation of the object such as television literacy or genre literacy, or omitting the 'media' by advocating non-media-centric literacy labelled as post-media-literacy.⁴⁰

We can assess that previously media literacy and education were about how people can learn to deal with media. Now, in the era of deep mediatization⁴¹ and disappearance of the media from the centre⁴² media literacy and education is about how people can deal with society that is profoundly mediated and includes the people as media actors. We are living in a situation where the general educational function cannot completely be separated from the media educational function. Examining factual television as purely educational content also entails the media educational perspective, even if its strength and relevance varies, because in order to receive mediated content the receiver needs to be able to understand the mediated character of it. Indeed, Hartley⁴³ suggests that by providing individuals with possibilities for informal learning, television 'teaches the formation of identity and citizenship in a society characterized by the unknowability of its nevertheless sovereign populations'; however, at the same time, the 'outcome is both literacy in audio-visuality and citizenship of media – to be used who knows how, by populations whose purposes and actions are outside of the pedagogic relations used by TV.' Hartley, in other words, expresses the educational and media educational function of media in a way that we want to examine factual television as a 'teacher.'

This implies that when educating audiences on whatever topics, the mediatic character of factual television cannot be dismissed; television is education in a *mediated* form anyway. The educational character of factual television can thus be discussed within the current MIL framework without the need of focusing on the media-related dimensions. Therefore, the MIL framework can thus prove to be an appropriate context to address today's televisual pedagogies, whether they deal with *media* education or education in general.

As for the PSM, it is common in the policy thinking to see MIL as activities driven by other organizations, involving media in collaboration rather than seeing PSM as MIL activity initiators. For example, Scott⁴⁴ highlights the connection between PSM and schools and writes that 'MIL activities taking place outside of formal education are often the result of collaborations between broadcasters and cultural centres, community media or specific MIL not-for-profit organisations.' In the national Finnish media education policy,⁴⁵ Yle is characterized as 'a long-term promoter of media education among companies in the media sector' and it is said that it 'actively produces media education materials on its websites.' Being available for collaboration and providing online resources specially dedicated to media education

forms a very limited and static notion of PSM providing media education. In this article, we want to widen the perspective by searching for more versatile connections between PSM (factual television) and MIL, readjusting the perspective on PSM as more active promoters of MIL.

5 Factual Programmes' Media Pedagogies

In the context of PSM media, the specific function of delivering media education is typically allocated to content that is predominantly media-educational, that is, shows an explicit educational function, often for children and young audiences. There are educational genres and channels, and these can be found in all genre categories, such as news programmes targeting children in the event-oriented category⁴⁶ and fact-oriented programmes and learning resources made for schooling.⁴⁷ However, if considered at a more general level, the entire factual genre ecology in factual television bears relevance to MIL and can be assigned media-educational functions in different degrees.

Factual programmes lie at the heart of delivering fact- and value-based insights to foster cultural citizenship among audiences. This role may appear as somewhat self-evident, as it forms a central mission of the very PSM that should, in particular in the digital era, be committed to enhancing social, political and cultural cohesion, as well as sustaining national cultures and democratic societies.⁴⁸ In Finnish Yle's⁴⁹ case, this obligation, which comes close to the objectives of the MIL framework, is expressed as an aim to 'strengthen Finnish society, culture and mutual understanding through shared experiences, reliable information and inspiring moments,' providing 'added value for people and society.' According to UNESCO's MIL policy guidelines,⁵⁰ broadcasters, as part of 'mass media' and 'the corporate world' stakeholdership, 'can all assist in ensuring the permanence of MIL issues in the public and developing all citizens' information and media competencies,' and 'the types of activities that could be developed, strengthened, replicated to reach cities, remote, rural and marginalized groups are endless.'

Taken together, when factual television educates, it is following both an educational mission in general and a specific media educational mission.⁵¹ The first mentioned can be said to entail all the didactic work embedded in journalistic values and practices to tell audiences about the world to keep them informed and educated about the world via media. The latter is more specifically focused on educating audiences about the mediated communication and media logics, to make citizens more skillful and critical media consumers who can put the messages they receive into a context. To identify the relevant relationships between factual television and (media) education, we suggest that factual television typically contributes to the media literacy and education in the following major forms:

In-media pedagogies: Factual programmes promote learning based on the content they deliver. For example, documentaries and reality series 'teach' viewers about a specific subject, whether general or media-specific. In-media pedagogies assume that all content is inherently educational in a way, and the aspects of learning are typically so tightly part of all communication that they become somewhat diaphanous.

On-media pedagogies: Factual programmes promote learning on the medium/genre itself. For example, a talk show on documentaries advances learning about the genre in question, at a meta-level. On-media pedagogies have traditionally lain in the area of responsibility of the educational programmes and organizational units that also collaborate with schools and educators.

With-media pedagogies: Factual programmes promote learning and connect to learning agendas on unpredictable things when consuming it. For example, programmes are used for different purposes as part of mediated everyday, even counter to the original purposes. With-media pedagogies most aptly dovetail with informal learning practices that occur beyond the control of any institutions. Some of the newest cross-platform programme concepts may also entail services that concretely help audiences in their everyday struggles, such as chats and helplines, co-produced with stakeholders.

Through-media pedagogies: Factual programmes promote learning by inviting learners into co-producers of content on different platforms dedicated to presumptive activities by user engagement. For example, programmes and platforms make consumers into prosumers where they become media producers themselves and continue the life cycle of the programme in social media or a PSM app. Through-media pedagogies are often manifest in explicit organizational efforts of pedagogical inclusion, such as in audience development⁵² or, to address an example beyond the media, museum pedagogy.⁵³ They can also be captured by the central ideas of public pedagogy.⁵⁴ Both audience development and public pedagogy are aimed at increasing the outreach of their output by creating mutual relevance and reciprocity based on participation through (the incentive of) learning.

These pedagogies can be found at different levels, ranging from a single programme to a programme category. They are often overlapping and the pedagogies of different factual subgenres may emphasise different dimensions, yet many programmes and subgenres propose a dominant pedagogical purpose. They also reflect the MIL policies by featuring the strategic points where transformative processes of learning may occur. Next, to figure out how these pedagogies may work in practice, we choose an example of each genre category and examine its media-pedagogical dimensions and discuss how these dimensions were consciously exploited by producers. The examples include *Yle Mix* (Children's news) from the event-oriented genre category, *Politiikka-Suomi* (Political Finland) from the fact-oriented genre category, *Docventures* from the experience-oriented genre category, and *Ina Mikkolan tilipäivä* (Ina Mikkola's Payday) from the entertainment-oriented genre category (see Table 2). As programming is increasingly becoming a production of an entity of (online) services instead of a single-programme product policy, we focus on recent new productions within the factual television that presented a diversified multi-platform concept special to a PSM agenda. In the core of all these selected programme concepts, there is the traditional broadcast product with an idea of delivering new information to its audiences, which can basically be found in all news and general feature – the educational function of providing audiences with the possibility to discover something new to them.

Children's news has been a concept advanced by Yle under different labels, of which *Yle Mix* is the newest one. According to the producers – 'mix' refers to the Finnish interrogative word *miksi*, 'why' – the programme focuses on the journalistic core question, dominant in news: 'why is something happening?'⁵⁵ The news service thus had a predominant on-media educational function in introducing children to newsworthiness and news reporting style, yet anchored in in-media pedagogies of raising the youth's awareness of societal and democratic issues such as vaccination, the military workings of NATO, contemporary understandings of gender, or climate change. When the in-media aims were combined with the reciprocal and participatory approaches of with- and through-media pedagogies (e.g. asking the children about new story ideas, engaging them on platforms), the issues were intended to come as close to the target audience as possible.

Political Finland, which was preceded by "Rock," "Classical," and "Sports Finland" by the same production team, was traditional in combining archives and interviews but innovative in thematizing and recategorizing historical processes. Through "open-hearted" interviews with experienced politicians, dramatic changes in the recent national history were elucidated, analyzed and interpreted from inside, advancing in-media pedagogies of displaying politics as a game by "re-framing" political history. The potential disclosure of sensitive issues such as an alcohol problem of a top politician and how the case was managed in media, or how conflicts unfolded between personalities, added to the intensity of the on-media aspects that largely leaned on illustrating the role of media and the mediatization of political culture. The pedagogical in- and through-media capacities were tightly connected to audiences' personal relationship to occurrences that they had experienced themselves as citizens.

Docventures, now in its 8th season, aims at presenting new international documentaries to new and younger audiences. Each season consists of 6–10 weekly documentaries, a live-TV talk show hosted by two male celebrities, Riku Rantala and Tuomas Milonoff, who have become known for their intrepid travelogues *Madventures* (2002–2009), social media presence and real-life clubs where enthusiasts watch the package together. The starting point was very

Genre category orientation	Genre category	Programme Example	Form of media pedagogy	Form of pedagogical interventions	Pedagogical purposes and functions
Event-oriented	News	Children's news <i>Yle Mix</i> , launched in Fall 2020, addressing societal issues; https://areena.yle.fi/1-50576758	In-media On-media With-media	Telling about societal issues in youth- and platform-adjusted style Highlighting the news specificity Drawing on children's lifeworlds	Raising interest in democratic and political issues Increasing understanding of news(-worthiness) Embedding learning in the children's everyday Engaging children to suggest ideas New knowledge about the past Critical examination of cultural heritage and mediated politics Reassessment of individual's own conceptions Reflexivity of individual's reception experiences through engagement
Fact-oriented	(Journalistic) documentary	<i>Political Finland</i> , a 10-hour history series featuring politicians 'talking honestly' about the recent national history, 2021; https://areena.yle.fi/1-50957002	Through-media In-media On-media With-media	Involvement in story ideation New insights to recent history Re-evaluation of news archives and former truths Unexpected angles to familiar issues	Engaging children to suggest ideas New knowledge about the past Critical examination of cultural heritage and mediated politics Reassessment of individual's own conceptions Reflexivity of individual's reception experiences through engagement
Experience-oriented	(Artistic) documentary	<i>Docventures</i> , a documentary 360 cross-media production concept, launched by Yle and GimmeYaWallet Productions in 2013 (Yle TV2), https://areena.yle.fi/tv/ohjelmat/57-6A3z-pzWVa	In-media On-media With-media Through-media	Presenting new documentaries Studio meta-talks with guests on documentaries Developing a sense of collectivity, the 'documentary community' Fan engagement in online discussions, live clubs Career coaching through entertainment	Introduction of the documentary genre to a new audience, creation of a new audience Development of genre understanding and metadiscourse Adding a social layer to watching documentaries Engaging friends of documentary, enhancing their fan identity Smashing (together) taboos in worklife
Entertainment-oriented	Lifestyle	<i>Ina Mikkola's Payday</i> , a cross-media production led by a 'Gen Y' (born in 1990) TV person 'crushing taboos of work life' (Yle TV2), https://areena.yle.fi/1-50602803	In-media On-media With-media	Career coaching through entertainment Activation of audiences' emotional repertoire 'for making a change' Embedding the 'career coaching' in audiences' everyday experiences (from worklife)	Becoming empowered in the audience by the involvement in processes of problem-solving, sharing and caring Drawing on everyday challenges in worklife and developing a sense of being included in a transformative change of worklife discourse and practices
			Through-media	Co-creation in studio through outsourced problem-solving, social media engagement (chat, self-tests)	Involving audiences by inviting them to present and solve challenges through gamification

Figure 2. Pedagogies of factual television in different genre categories.

on-media-didactic: introducing inexperienced audiences to small-audience productions within a genre that was losing on its familiarity among the younger generations. The development of a metadiscourse on the documentary genre was merged with an in-media aim to show the documentary world to this audience and let them discover it via with- and through-media pedagogies: by identifying as friends and fans of documentaries, audiences formed virtual and on-spot communities that were in tight interaction with the producers, who for their part could be described as public educators of documentary film.

Payday consisted of a live broadcast in a talkshow format with invited guests, a podcast and YouTube video series, a reality series on the Areena app, a chat on Yle's website and strong social media engagement on Instagram, Facebook and Twitter. The programme had a with-and through-media emphasis in its pedagogical orientation. The through-media concept was gamified through a challenge presented by a studio guest, an 'ordinary employee' – easy to identify with – experiencing some career challenges, and invited experts who formed a jury, together with the active audience, were given the assignment to solve the guest's problem. Career coaching became a collective effort in which discourse on inequalities and shortcomings of worklife could be addressed and audiences empowered.

All productions created a critical societal angle on their topics, which in the *Docventures* documentaries and affiliated studio discussions varied from religion to men and emotions, from porn to corruption, and in *Payday* dealt with sensitive subjects such as envy, shame and ambition in career development. Furthermore, resources put into a channel that can be publicly accessed are complemented by results of service design aimed – from the MIL perspective – at enhancing the pedagogical potential of these resources. *Polical Finland* had a high production value, redeemed in approaching familiar history from viewpoints such as depression, being pissed, idealism, activism and disappointment; entertaining but also loaded with detailed facts and sincere witnesses, striking up unprecedented public enthusiasm in history. The distinctive dimension of *Docventures* was, through inviting experts into the studio for discussions related to the documentaries broadcast, producing metadiscourse on the topics of the documentaries shown, as well as meta-understanding of the documentary genre that may be foreign to average younger audiences. In addition to produsage in the form of reactions and discussions, user engagement was evoked by asking the audience members' opinions, ideas and suggestions related to upcoming productions. In *Payday*, there presumptive feature was developed even further, as there was a strong co-creative commitment of solving a problem together and, this way, embedding it in the everyday consumption and life of the audiences.

The central MIL dimensions became especially visible in the transmedia productions representing the four genre categories, which aptly illustrates the MIL features in factual television (see RQ1) and helps us better understand how factual television can be regarded as MIL education (RQ2). It seems that on-media dimensions were typically pinpointed by underlining the genre specificity – by labelling the programme as representing 'news,' 'documentaries' or a 'studio show'. With-media dimensions were secured by seeking authenticity in the selection of topics through trying to embed them in the viewers' and users' everyday lives. This dimension was accompanied and strengthened by user engagement and through-media features, such as online discussions and audience contacts of different kinds.

Exploring the different media-educational dimensions in genres lay a foundation for a genre-specific public pedagogy that may be used to identify and utilize the MIL dimension of programming. Inserting the pedagogical or educational component to programming this way may imply the political governance through media education to envision and create aspired (cultural) citizenships in society. Subduing television or, more specifically, factual television, to the MIL framework thus to some extent implies highlighting the usefulness of this content and instrumentalizing it in a way that may also seem problematic. However, more broadly, examining media content from the vantage point of learning and pedagogy marks a research agenda with increasing policy relevance and may help us re-discover its potential values in times where the role of PSM is questioned.

5 Discussion

The approach presented in this paper provides an alternative way of connecting television to the MIL framework, where television and PSM are typically merely mentioned as part of the media sector designing specific activities in collaboration with other educational agents to run MIL promotion. Informal pedagogies of television are hard to capture and impossible to formalize, as they basically unfold everywhere and are not limited to an institutional setting and its policies or practices. In (factual) television, the formal and informal contexts of learning also often overlap. Genre-focused inquiries can, however, fruitfully bridge ways of explicit and implicit learning.

Factual television is typically seen and discussed as a coherent entity, supported by organizational structures focused on ‘fact-based narratives of society and its people,’ but, in fact, it constitutes a category that can best be described as a heterogeneous genre category. Accordingly, the diversity means that factual television also forms a multi-stakeholder genre category. It is not only that science documentaries and reality television programmes are likely to attract heterogeneous audiences in terms of age, gender and socioeconomic position, but they also entail very different epistemologies and, what we have wanted to discuss here, (informal) pedagogies. The learning processes supported by factual television thus implies a very varied work with MIL that complements the learning resources that different target groups make use of in other contexts than television.

The role and share of factual content in PSM have been changing during the past decades because of digitalization and platformization of production. Many traditional Finnish factual programmes have been laid down, to the extent that the plurality of the factual genres has been assessed to be under threat.⁵⁶ At the same time, examples such as *Docventures* and *Payday* show that there is room for a distinct genre pedagogy for television within the media-driven MIL ecology, which serves as an example of development of PSM pedagogies, not necessarily implying instrumentalizing programming into a policy-implementation instrument, even if this criticism may sometimes be valid.

6 Conclusion

This study examined factual programmes in contemporary PSM as a resource for MIL education, contextualizing the educational function of PSM in general and of the factual programme genre in particular as part of the MIL framework. In the Finnish context, we intended to pinpoint how factual television can be conceptualized as part of the MIL discourse and ecology in society.

The theoretical discussion in this article calls for more empirical work, inquiring into the different pedagogical approaches in programming and the audience reception among the very different stakeholders of the factual genre. When television scholars are examining questions related to informal learning, they are not using the same concepts and vocabularies as pedagogical researchers and learning theorists, even if they may be addressing the same social phenomena. This is why the cross-fertilization of media and pedagogical discourses and research agendas need to be continued to elaborate media- and media-genre-specific frameworks of learning that increase our understandings of, in and through media in different social contexts.

Notes

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Biographies

Maarit Jaakkola, PhD, Associate Professor, is co-director of Nordicom, a research centre for Nordic media research at the University of Gothenburg in Sweden. She is also an associate professor in journalism at the Department of Journalism, Media and Communication (JMG) at the University of Gothenburg and an adjunct professor in journalism at the Faculty of Information Technology and Communication Sciences (ITC) at Tampere University in Finland. Jaakkola's research interests are interdisciplinary and connected to the questions of (digital) media and journalism, cultural practices, and learning.

Marjaana Mykkänen, PhD, is a Director and Executive Producer working for the Finnish Broadcasting Company and as an independent documentarist. Her productions include several award-winning films and TV-programs, and she has been responsible for a voluminous share of cultural programming on Finnish television since 1980. Mykkänen's research interests include engagement with and impact of factual television, and the prospects of (analogue and digital) public service television.