

Media Education Research in Finland: A Literature Review

A review of Finnish research literature on media education, in particular academic theses and peer-reviewed articles in academic journals, mostly dating from 2007 to 2012



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Abstract

The present report addresses media education-related research conducted in Finland in recent years: what has been studied and where, how much research has been conducted and what kinds of methods have been used. The report is based on a literature review on Finnish doctoral dissertations, licentiate's theses, master's theses from universities and master's level theses from universities of applied sciences, as well as peer-reviewed articles in academic journals published mostly electronically in Finland and dating from 2007 to 2012.

No systematic literature review on media education-related research published in Finland has been undertaken before. Media education as a research area is quintessentially inter- and multidisciplinary, and, thus, many different types of research on media and education can be classified as media education-related research.

The subject of media education research has often been approached from the perspective of what can be called division into "tribes", each tribe representing different research perspectives and emphases. In addition, conceptualizations of media and education, i.e. how the concepts *media* and *education* are understood in relation to media education and to media education-related research, influence the way in which the scope of media education research is defined. In this study, an extensive definition of media education as an interdisciplinary research area is adopted, encompassing research conducted within disciplines as diverse as social sciences, humanities and the arts.

The data for the literature review on media education-related research was collected from research and article databases of universities and other institutions of higher learning. The majority of the literature searches were performed during the autumn of 2012. After defining the scope of the review, a total of 52 electronic and print dissertations, 80 electronic master's theses from universities, 3 licentiate's theses, 3 master's level theses from universities of applied sciences, as well as 18 electronically-available refereed academic articles related to media education were selected for analysis. The data were classified using quantitative and qualitative methods.

The results indicate that, overall, more media education-related research is being conducted than was originally estimated, in particular when taking into account academic theses. However, a closer examination reveals that there has been very little empirical research on media education *an sich*.

Overall, the media education-related research publications examined here were classified according to the central research themes into three main categories: (1) research that focuses on *media education in itself*, (2) research that addresses

media, media culture or media cultural phenomena and issues from the perspective of development, education and (3) research examining the educational use of information and communication technology. Only about one-fifth of the publications addressed media education in itself.

In addition, research focusing on media, media culture or media cultural phenomena and issues was organised according to recurring research themes. The most frequently emerging themes were children's or youth's *relationship with media* (9,6 %), *media influence*, (5,1 %), different *media contents* (9,0 %) such as advertisements or television programmes, or *media culture* in general and the development of information society (5,1 %).

The review reveals that the majority of research on media education is qualitative or mixed-method research combining qualitative and quantitative data. The main informants of the studies were children, youth, pupils and students as well as teachers and parents. It is worth noting that the perspective of young adults, adults, or the aged (aged 65 years and over) was rarely examined. The adult's perspective on media or media culture was usually studied through the role of the parent or the teacher.

The review indicates that the highest number of media education-related theses was produced at the University of Tampere, followed by the University of Jyväskylä in the second rank and the University of Lapland in the third rank.

This literature review was produced as a joint project of Foundation for Cultural Policy Research Cupore and Finnish Centre for Media Education and Audio-visual Media MEKU. This review was undertaken as a part of the follow-up project for promoting national media education (2012–2013), and it aims at opening fresh discussion on media education research needs among researchers representing different universities and other institutes of higher learning, different disciplines and fields of research and among media education practitioners.

KEY WORDS: media education, media literacy, media skills, media culture, the educational use of information and communication technology, literature review, content analysis



Preface

Media education research is still a relatively young field in Finland. The purpose of this literature review is to raise awareness of media education and the related research and to spark discussion on the current state and future of the research area.

Operating at the beginning of 2012, the Finnish Centre for Media Education and Audiovisual Media MEKU will merge with The National Audiovisual Archive at the beginning of 2014, forming The National Audiovisual Institute (KAVI). One of the legal tasks of the new institute is promotion of media education. One of the reasons for conducting the present review was the need to expand the knowledge base of media education in order to assist media education authorities and other actors working in the field in their efforts.

When performing the data searches, it soon became clear that the existing body of research relevant to media education is even larger than was originally estimated. Producing a literature review inevitably requires a clear and concrete definition of the scope of the study. This review does not cover the entire body of media education-related research conducted in Finland. Similarly, a great deal of central texts written by experts in the field was omitted from this review due to its focus on research publications.

When demarcating the scope of the study, it became evident that research on media education is highly phenomenon-driven. This review indicates that conceptual differences and even lack of clarity in reporting are still relatively common. In order to make media education research approachable to the non-expert reader, with the goal of raising general awareness of media education, efforts should be made to define the concepts in a clear and accessible way.

In addition, we need to establish what disciplines and what kinds of research perspectives can be seen as belonging to the field of media education. What are the criteria that a piece of research must fulfil in order to be classified as media education research? Educational sciences and communication sciences occupy a central position in media education research, but a great deal of research is being conducted within other disciplines as well. Thus, the role of multi- and interdisciplinary discussion is central, and the scope of media education can potentially be defined in different ways, this review being one example.

A great deal of Finnish media education research reports are written in English and published outside of Finland. More work is needed to establish Finnish-language definitions of media education concepts and to encourage discussion to support education and to build a stronger foundation for the research area of media education.

This literature review presents one perspective on Finnish media education research. In the future, more work is needed in charting the field of media education research both in terms of quantity and in terms of content, with the objective of expanding the scope of inquiry to include Finnish research published outside of Finland. Furthermore, more detailed content analysis of existing research is needed. This review aims at opening fresh discussion and serves as an invitation to further develop insights into media education research.

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1

A Review of Finnish Research on Media Education

1.1 Background

The present report addresses media education-related research conducted in Finland in recent years: what has been studied and where, what kinds of methods have been used and how much research has been carried out. This report is based on a literature review on media education-related academic theses and peer-reviewed articles, mostly published electronically and dating from 2007 to 2012. The literature review has been produced as a joint project of Foundation for Cultural Policy Research Cupore and Finnish Centre for Media Education and Audiovisual Media MEKU. The review was produced as a part of a follow-up project for promoting national media education (2012–2013).

No systematic literature review, in the proper sense of the term, on Finnish research related to media education has been carried out before. A similar account has been presented by Uusitalo (2005, 107–131) as a part of the report entitled *Media Education 2005. National Development Needs*¹ (Kotilainen & Sintonen 2005). The sources on which the review is based have not been limited to academic research, but different kinds of articles and other types of texts on media education written from a popular perspective have been included as well. Moreover, the review does not elaborate on themes such as topics of articles or perspectives on media education. In addition to Uusitalo's review, Finnish media education research has been archived on the website of The Finnish Society of Media Education as well as on the *EU Kids Online* network's commission. On the website of the Finnish Society of Media Education, publications have been classified by publication type and subject area. However, publications are not being searched and archived systematically and researchers can also add their own media education-related publications to the website.² The research charted by the *EU Kids Online* network is research related to children, youth and the Internet and, thus, does not address media education as a whole. As is the case with Finnish Society of Media Education, the publications have been entered into the research database³ from which research conducted in Finland can be retrieved by using the search term *finland*.

1 http://oikeusministerio.fi/fi/index/julkaisut/julkaisuarkisto/20055mediakasvatus2005/Files/OMJU_2005_5_Mediakasvatus.pdf

2 <http://www.mediakasvatus.fi/tutkimukset>

3 <http://www2.lse.ac.uk/media@lse/research/EUKidsOnline/DB/home.aspx>

The objective of the present review is to provide an outline of media education-related research carried out in Finland. The report seeks to raise awareness of and spark discussion on media education as a field of research, its concepts, research perspectives and methodology.

1.2 Media Education between Disciplines

When producing a literature review, defining the scope of the data is essential. In the present review, this question comes to the fore because media education as a research area lacks clear definitions and boundaries. In the Finnish research tradition, educational sciences and communication sciences have been regarded as the background sciences of media education, but media education-related research is conducted in the humanities and social sciences as well, e.g. within cultural studies, sociology, psychology and economic sciences. (Kotilainen & Suoranta 2005, 73–74.) Given this diversity of perspectives, media education is not generally seen as a research area belonging to a single discipline but rather as an interdisciplinary one. According to Kotilainen and Suoranta (2005, 74), defining media education as an interdiscipline means that objects of study and research interests do not originate within the discipline itself but come from the outside in the form of everyday phenomena and questions. Media education research can be characterized as phenomenon-driven.

Finnish media education-related research has been classified in various ways. According to Kupiainen, Sintonen and Suoranta (2007, 21), overarching themes for media education research are culture immersed in media, individuals' groups' or audiences' relationship with media and media-cultural phenomena, as well as structures of media and society. Often media education research is also classified following what is referred to as division into "tribes" based on different research perspectives and emphases. Kotilainen and Suoranta (2005, 74–75) discern four different emphases of media education and its research, each forming one tribe: 1) the technology tribe, 2) the protection tribe, 3) the culture research tribe and 4) the critical tribe. Research conducted by the technology tribe concentrates on the educational use of information and communication technology and learning, for example e-teaching and learning environments. The primary research interest of the protection tribe is protecting children from harmful influences of media. The culture research tribe focuses on media use, analysis and interpretation skills and its object of study is human reality in all its manifestations. The critical tribe, for its part, is interested in media and power relations and the manipulative aspect of media. The research conducted by the critical tribe encourages resistance, participation and active citizenship. (Kotilainen and Suoranta 2005, 74–75.) In practice the tribes are not clear-cut categories. A study may include perspectives and research interests of different tribes. The tribes do not necessarily conform to a single discipline either, and, thus, for example the critical tribe's approach can be emphasized in research perspectives of educational sciences as well as social sciences.

In addition to the different approaches and objects of study, the conceptualization of media and education, i.e. how the terms or concepts *media* and *education* are defined in relation to media education and media education-related research influences the scope of media education research. Media education has typically been defined and understood through the concepts of media and education. (see e.g. Vesterinen 2006)

1.3 Emphases and Perspectives of Media Education

Media education can be understood as *education and learning about and through media*, whereby the object of study consist education through and with media as well as about media (Kupiainen & Sintonen 2009, 15, 30–31; Kupiainen, Sintonen & Suoranta 2007, 6; Buckingham 2003; Kotilainen 2001, 47). This definition highlights the conscious and target-oriented research on media in education and as an object of education. However, media should not be thought of as a separate entity, but as an integral part of everyday life, practices and culture. Kupiainen and Sintonen (2009,31) summarize media education as

“-- goal-oriented interaction [...] involving the educator, the learner and media culture. – education and learning are part of our life-world and the cultural and historical factors that are constructed in the everyday.”

Media education researchers representing the strand of thought referred to as the technology tribe focus on the educational use of information and communication technology (ICT) with the objective of supporting learning. ICT aims at development of different areas of media skills and media and technology management skills. According to Tella's (2001, 30; Tella & Ruokamo 2005, 10) definition

“ - media skills are closely related to ethical and aesthetic questions as well as to a more profound understanding of the significance of visual communication in our hitherto textually-dominated culture. If the above-mentioned areas are subtly interlinked, media and education meet in harmony as media education.”

The technology tribe differs from the culture research tribe in that it sees the educational use of information and communication technology in itself as a form of media education. On the other hand, the difference is rooted in the relationship between the concepts “media” and “technology”, i.e. whether a channel-oriented definition of media based on information and communication technology is adopted, or whether media is rather understood as public representations and communicative, mediated interaction.

However, in practice teaching about and through media are intertwined (Kupiainen, Sintonen & Suoranta 2007, 7). Even though ‘media’ as a concept eludes a precise definition and is in a constant flux, it cannot be seen as separate from the concepts of communication and technology (Kupiainen 2005, 48). According to Kupiainen and Sintonen (2009, 28), media education of the 21st century can be seen as a sum of social, technological and expressive orientations, whereby media can be understood as a journalistic, social, cultural as well as technological phenomenon. Media education, on the other hand, includes analysis of media representations and media culture as well as interpretive production of media representations (Kupiainen & Sintonen 2009, 28.)

On the one hand, media in itself can be seen as an informal learning environment with educational potential that functions as a vehicle of socialization and influences world views (Mustonen 2001; Kupiainen 2002; see also Suoranta 2003). However, the media user's active role in relation to media is emphasized: Media is consumed and produced and it is used as a resource to build identity (Mustonen 2001, 119). On the other hand, growing up in a media environment does not automatically make an individual media literate (Kupiainen & Sintonen 2009, 30). Development of media literacy is the objective of media education.

Media Literacy and Media Skills

Media literacy consists of many different types of literacy depending on the medium, expressive and technological production skills, such as digital literacy or visual literacy, as well as ethical and aesthetic skills related to media (Kupiainen & Sintonen 2009, 15; Ruokamo 2005, 137; Tella 2001). A media-literate individual is aware of his/her role as a media user and as part of media culture, and is, thus, better equipped to protect him/herself from negative effects of media. On the other hand, media literacy can promote an individual's autonomy, critical and creative thinking, aesthetic taste, social conscience, self-esteem, empowerment, and role as a consumer and a citizen. (Kupiainen & Sintonen 2009, 94–95.)

Critical media skills constitute a central aspect of media literacy. Critical media skills refer to e.g. knowledge and skills needed to deconstruct and analyse the workings of media and its economic and political structures, to analyse media representations, and to use media independently and actively both communally and socially (Herkman 2007, 48). According to Herkman (2007, 35), criticalness refers to the ability to see beyond prevailing beliefs and knowledge with the objective of striving towards the highest attainable standard of equality in society. Thus, criticalness does not mean negativity, but intellectual curiosity about the world in which knowledge mediated by the media, or even the school, is not accepted unthinkingly, but things and phenomena are looked at with new eyes. Critical media education, which has its roots in critical pedagogy, is one of the areas of emphasis and research of media education.

In the extensive sense of the term, media skills can be seen as a part of civic skills and general knowledge that people need in order to be able to take an active and responsible role in the mediatised society. Following Tapscott and Williams (2006), Kupiainen and Sintonen (2009, 21) write about *culture of participation* characterized by digital media networks, sharing and functioning in a global (media) environment, openness and collective intelligence. In order to be able to function in such an environment, one must have understanding of the large structures and developments of media culture that permeate all mediated information and multidirectional communication.

Media skills are social skills supporting lifelong learning that everyone should be able to acquire. (Kupiainen & Sintonen 2009, 15; Ruokamo 2005, 137; Tella 2001). However, it must be borne in mind that even though the Western world lives in what is referred to as the digital age, this is not the case everywhere in the world, and even in the Western world not everyone has an equal access to media or media technologies. For example, socioeconomic status and other demographic variables influence media access, e.g. regarding the internet (Kupiainen 2013, 11).

1.4 The Purpose and Objectives of the Review

An attempt at outlining Finnish media education research brings to fore questions of the inter- and multidisciplinary nature of the concepts and research perspectives related to the field. When preparing this review, we had to consider issues such as whether a study should deal with both *media* and *education* in order to be classified as media education research. We can, for example, ask whether audience research addressing individuals', groups' or communities' relationship with media—but not necessarily from the perspective of development or education—can be classified as media education research. Similarly, we can ask what the relationship between research on the educational use of (media) technology and research on media education is (see e.g. Kupiainen, Sintonen & Suoranta 2007, 6–7.)

The multidisciplinary character of media education brings together researchers of different fields studying phenomena related to mediums, education, development, teaching and media culture. The reverse side of multidisciplinaryity, however, is characterized by conceptual and theoretical incoherence and groundlessness of the research area. These continue to influence media education research, the development of media education as a field of inquiry, its profile and role in education, as well as general awareness of the purpose and objectives of media education. (Kupiainen, Sintonen & Suoranta 2007; Kotilainen & Sintonen 2005.) The different definitions and ways of outlining the scope of the discipline, the different schools of thought or “tribes” might come across as confusing for those who are not familiar with the field. Conceptual incoherence can also influence the actors in the field, as well as the voluntary sector (the third sector) which constitutes one of the most active sectors involved in media education in Finland.

The purpose of the present literature review is to chart the field of media education research and spark discussion on how to outline the scope of media education-related research. The review provides an overview of the multidisciplinary body of media education research in Finland by asking what is being researched, where, to what extent, and with what methodology:

1. At which universities and in what fields of study are media education-related theses produced and in what quantity?
2. What subject areas have been addressed in academic articles and theses and what methodology has been used?
3. How are the publications distributed across the field of media education research?

Due to the incoherence of concepts and definitions in the field, the aim of the data collection process was to include as wide spectrum of media education research as possible, from which a sample of studies representing some of the most central research topics relevant to media education was selected using the set criteria. When preparing the review, we were aware of the fact that the data selected do not cover the entire body of research on media education. Media education-related research can also be defined in different ways, and thus, the scope set for this review only applies to the data of this review and the related analysis.

2 Description of Data and Analysis

2.1 Data Collection

The data for the literature review of media education-related research were collected from research and article databases of universities and other institutions of higher learning. In addition, web search engines were used. The searches were mainly targeted at electronically-published theses and peer-reviewed academic articles but, at the initial stage, also books, conference proceedings, barometers, project and other reports on media education were included because the purpose of these publications is often significant regarding national promotion of media education. In practice, the objective was to collect all Finnish theoretical and empirical research and expert publications that were regarded as belonging to the research area of media education. Research published outside Finland in academic journals, conference proceedings and books was omitted from the review because the objective was to address media education research in the Finnish context.

The literature searches were performed mainly during the autumn of 2012. In addition, a supplementary search was conducted in the January of 2013 to include research published at the end of 2012. To be included in this review, a publication had to have at least an abstract available online. Doctoral dissertations were considered an exception due to their status as the highest form of thesis, and, thus, their significance to the research area. On the other hand, there are only a relatively small number of doctoral dissertations, and it was effortless to obtain them in print through the universities. For articles, master's level theses (university and university of applied sciences), books, monographs, reports and accounts the search was modified to display publications dating from 2007 to the present, and in the case of dissertations from 2000 to the present. In order to be included in this review, an article had to be peer-reviewed and published in a Finnish academic journal (e.g. *Kasvatus*, *Aikuiskasvatus* and *Lähikuva*) or compilation. Individual articles that make up a dissertation were not examined separately.

Publications were searched using the following search terms: *digital culture(s)*, *children and media*, *media education*, *media competence*, *media criticism*, *media culture*, *media literacy*, *media pedagogy*, *relationship with media*, *media skill*, *media skills*, *media parenthood*, *youth and media*, *educational technology*, *information and communication technology*, *educational use of information and communication technology*, *e-teaching*, *e-teaching environment*, *e-learning*, *web pedagogy*, *communications education*, *virtual anthropology* and *virtual community*. Children and youth

were mentioned separately in the search terms because an additional objective of the review was to take a look at research on minors, and because the main media education task of Finnish Centre for Media Education and Audiovisual Media MEKU focuses on children and youth.

2.2 Data Extraction and Analysis

For the purposes of the analysis, a *data extraction form* was created, through which a basic set of data was collected for each publication: research data, research methods, object of study and main findings (see Appendix 1). At the data extraction stage it was still possible to omit a publication from analysis if it was found not to meet the criteria set for media education research in this review.

We sought to define media education research in the extensive sense of the term as a multidisciplinary research area encompassing media education-related research conducted from the research perspectives of educational sciences, social sciences, humanities as well as the arts. The accepted publications had to be focused on at least one of the following topics:

- formal or informal teaching, studying, learning or education about and through media
- media and media education-related curricula
- the role of the teacher/educator in relation to media
- the educational use of information and communication technology
- individuals', groups' or communities' acquisition and development of media literacy skills of
- individuals', groups' or communities' relationship with media from an educational perspective
- media influence from the perspective of education or development
- media representations and media content from the perspective of education or development
- media culture from the perspective of education or development.

As far as information and communication technology (ICT) is concerned, studies addressing e.g. the general development of a school's technological infrastructure, testing a technology (for example research on user experiences) or game design, even if the objective of the game design were to develop a game that is intended to support learning. Studies on these subject areas were considered so technology-driven that they were omitted from the scope of this review. Research on information and communication technology use related to working life and work was also excluded from analysis on the grounds that the main task of MEKU focuses on children and youth. However, studies on e.g. continuing education may focus on the educational use of information and communication technology.

Despite the above mentioned criteria and the scope set for this study, tracing out the relationship between the various research topics and media education was by no means a straightforward task. A great deal of research related to, or inter-linked with, media, education and development, teaching and learning, and analysis of media content and media culture is being conducted. Thus, inclusions and exclusions were necessary in order to be able to provide an outline of the research area of media education. Although the present review has not been an attempt to outline a literary canon of media education research, it nevertheless represents one way of structuring and understanding the complex multidisciplinary field of

research and activity. Other approaches can be justified. The data were analyzed quantitatively using the SPSS program for statistical analysis and qualitatively using content analysis (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2003).

3 Results: Media Education-Related Research in Finland

3.1 Number of Research Publications Based on the Review Data

The literature searches performed in the library databases of universities and other institutions of higher learning yielded a total of 52 dissertations dating from 2000 to 2012, three electronically-published licentiate's theses dating from 2007 to 2012, three master's level theses from universities of applied sciences (hereinafter referred to as UAS) and 80 electronically-published master's theses from universities, dating from 2007 to 2012 (see Table 1). For theses, doctoral dissertations being an exception, only the ones with either the abstract or the full text publication available online were included in the analysis. The literature search yielded a total of 18 peer-reviewed articles related to media education published in academic journals and compilations in Finland.

Articles	18	
Doctoral dissertations	52	
Licentiate's theses	3	
Master's theses (university)	80	
Master's theses (UAS)	3	
Total	156	

Table 1. Literature review data: Number of publications by publication type.

The relatively high number of doctoral dissertations is partly due to the decision to include print publications alongside the electronic ones for this publication type. Moreover, the time frame for the search for doctoral dissertations was more extensive, from 2000 to 2012, whereas a narrower time frame, from 2007 to 2012, was used for master's level theses. Only three master's level theses from universities of applied sciences (UAS) and three licentiate's theses were included which is probably due to the fact that these types of degrees are pursued relatively infrequently. Especially in the case of the licentiate's degree, which constitutes a step between the master's degree and the doctoral degree, the possibility to omit the licentiate's level

and proceed directly from the master's level (master's thesis) to the doctoral level (doctoral dissertation) probably partly explains the low number of licentiate's theses present in this study.

3.1.1 Number of Published Theses by University

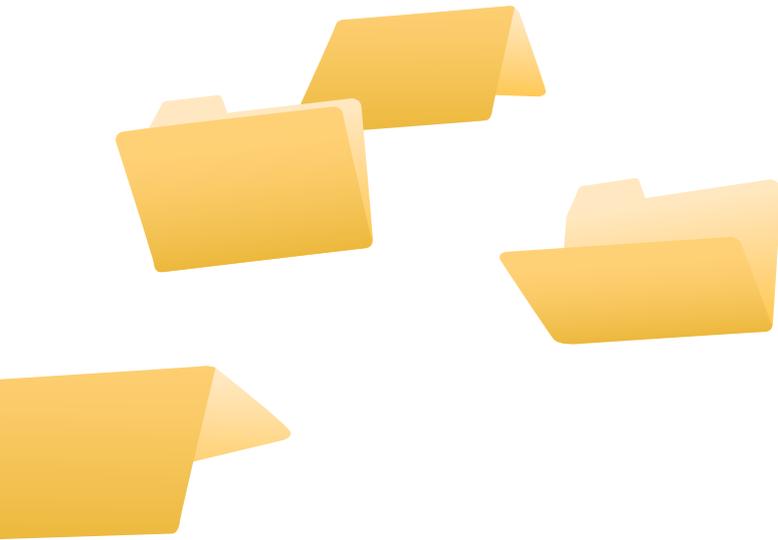
This review indicates that the highest number of media education-related theses has been published at the University of Tampere: a total of 40 theses. The University of Jyväskylä ranked second with 29 theses, and the University of Lapland third with 26 theses. The fourth highest number of theses, a total of 17, was found at the University of Helsinki. Of the media education-related theses published at the University of Tampere, 12 were doctoral dissertations, one licentiate's dissertation, and 27 master's theses. At the University of Jyväskylä, eight doctoral dissertations, one licentiate's dissertation, and 20 master's theses—the second highest number of master's theses overall—have been published. Ranking third with regard to the overall number of theses, the University of Lapland produced the second highest number of media education-related doctoral dissertations—a total of nine.

The database searches indicate that a total of 17 media education-related master's theses were published at the University of Lapland. A total of nine media education-related doctoral dissertations were produced at the University of Helsinki,

Quantity

THESES					
	Master's theses 2007–2012	Licentiate's theses 2007–2012	Master's theses (UAS) 2007–2012	Doctoral dissertations 2000–2012	Total
University of Tampere	27	1	0	12	40
University of Jyväskylä	20	1	0	8	29
University of Lapland	17	0	0	9	26
University of Helsinki	7	1	0	9	17
University of Turku	4	0	0	4	8
Aalto University	1	0	0	0	1
University of Vaasa	3	0	0	1	4
University of Oulu	0	0	0	3	3
Sibelius Academy	0	0	0	1	1
University of Eastern Finland	1	0	0	2	3
Aalto University School of Arts, Design and Architecture	0	0	0	1	1
HAMK University of Applied Sciences	0	0	2	0	2
Helsinki Metropolia University of Applied Sciences	0	0	1	0	1
University of Joensuu	0	0	0	2	2
Total	80	3	3	52	138

Table 2. Media education-related master's, licentiate's and UAS theses (2007–2012) and doctoral dissertations (2000–2012) by institute of higher learning.



making doctoral dissertation the most frequently published type of thesis in Helsinki. In addition, Helsinki produced seven master's theses and one licentiate's thesis. The review shows that media education-related theses have also been published at the University of Turku: A total of eight, four of which are doctoral dissertations, and another four master's theses. Some media education-related theses were found at other Finnish universities as well, for example three doctoral dissertations at the University of Oulu and two at the University of Eastern Finland.

It is important to note that, with the exception of doctoral dissertations, the results and tables only include the theses referencing, at least, an electronically-available abstract. If the abstract or the thesis itself was not electronically available, it was omitted from this study. Due to limited resources, we were not able to include all master's theses that were available in print only in this review. In addition, during the data search process we found out that the thesis database content of some universities was inadequate or the search results of theses differed according to the search engine used. It seems that the publication practices for theses differ from one university to another, which may influence the findability of theses, or even complicate the search process. For the reasons stated above, it is likely that at least a few theses might have been missed in the search, and thus the numbers presented here might not fully reflect the actual situation.

3.1.2 Number of Published Theses by Field of Education

Media education-related theses published at universities and other institutions of higher learning were classified according to the Council of State Ordinances (794/2004, 352/2003) into fields of education according to subject and faculty or unit (Table 3). For doctoral dissertations, a possible publication series was also taken into consideration. However, from the perspective of this review, fields of education were not regarded as absolute since some of the theses, in terms of content, might equally well be classified as belonging to some other field of education (see e.g. Suoranta 2012, 18).

According to the classification, media education-related theses have been produced at least in 12 different fields of education. Despite the inter- and multidisciplinary nature of media education, this review indicates that the majority of theses (a total of 87) have been published in the field of educational science, followed by the humanities (13), natural sciences (13) and social sciences (13). Some media education-related theses have also been published in the field of the arts (3), psychology (2), health sciences (2), technical scientific (1) and music (1).

Quantity

THESES					
FIELDS OF EDUCATION	Master's theses 2007–2012	Licentiate's theses 2007–2012	Master's theses (UAS) 2007–2012	Doctoral dissertations 2000–2012	Total
Educational science	53	1	0	33	87
Humanities	7	1	0	5	13
Natural sciences	8	0	0	5	13
Social sciences	8	1	0	4	13
Arts	2	0	0	1	3
Psychology	0	0	0	2	2
Health sciences	2	0	0	0	2
Technical scientific	0	0	0	1	1
Music	0	0	0	1	1
Social and health care development and management	0	0	1	0	1
Technology and transportation	0	0	1	0	1
Natural resources and the environment	0	0	1	0	1
Yhteensä	80	3	3	52	138

Table 3. Media education-related master's, licentiate's and UAS theses (2007–2012) and doctoral dissertations (2000–2012) by field of education.

When investigating the above mentioned fields of education in terms of breakdown by degree programme in the background of each thesis, the review indicates that the theses published in the field of educational sciences have been produced in degree programmes of Adult education, Education, Craft science, Media education and Early childhood education. In the humanities, theses have been produced at least in degree programmes of Digital culture, Media studies, Art education and Communication sciences. In the field of natural sciences, theses have been produced in degree programmes of Information science and Interactive media, Chemistry, Mathematics, Software engineering, Computer science, Information technology and Interactive technology. Theses published in the field of social sciences have been produced in degree programmes of Geography, Journalism and mass communication, Social policy, Social work, and Sociology.

As for universities of applied sciences, the database searches yielded only three media education-related master's level theses (UAS). They were produced in the degree programmes of Social and health care development and management, Technology and transportation, and Natural resources and the environment.

Only master's level and higher theses were included in the analysis undertaken here, and thus e.g. bachelor's theses and other undergraduate theses fell outside of the scope of this study. However, during the data collection process, a brief investigation was conducted on the omitted publication types and it seems that relatively many undergraduate-level theses related to media education are being produced especially at universities of applied sciences. Thus, had the undergraduate theses been included in this analysis, the distribution of publications across universities and universities of applied science would look somewhat different.

3.2 What Kind of Media Education-Related Research has been Conducted in Finland?

3.2.1 Objects of Study

The main objective of this review was to find out what kind of media education-related research is conducted in Finland. To answer this question, the data were analyzed to trace out the main research themes the research area of media education can be said to be divided into, and to provide an account of the main research methodology that has been used in the studies. Content analysis was conducted by classifying and thematizing the data and by quantifying the presence of the themes in the publications (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2003, 95, 110–119).

In practice, the publications (N=156) collected for the purposes of this study were grouped into themed categories by object of study, which made it possible to form an overview of the most researched themes, typical objects of study, and the most frequently used methodological approaches. To start with, the main research themes and objects of study were collected for each publication. After this, the publications were compared on the basis of the information obtained in order to find similarities according to which the publications could be organized in thematic categories (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2003, 95–96). In general, the publications manifested a whole range of research topics. However, certain recurring themes and objects of study clearly emerged that were familiar from earlier studies on media education research as well (see e.g. Kotilainen & Suoranta 2005; Vesterinen et al. 2006).

The clearest category was formed by research that addressed media education *in itself*, *educatorship in terms of media education* or media skills (Table 4.). As an object of study, media education was investigated, for example, as a part of pre-primary and primary education, basic education and teacher training, or from a more practical perspective, regarding e.g. newspaper in education. Some studies examined media education or media literacy in itself, e.g. ethics of media education and the conceptual limits of media literacy. (Research topics have been listed in greater detail under section 3.2.4). Regardless of the topic, the studies approached issues and phenomena through concepts related to media education and referred to research literature of the field. In other words, the researchers themselves located their work in relation to media education and the research area of media education.

A second category was composed of research that mainly addressed issues and phenomena related to media culture, media in itself and media as a part of human life (Table 4.). The publications were organized by theme into research categories that particularly addressed user's relationship with media, media influence, different mediums, or, more extensively, media culture or development of information society. Some research topics were e.g. children's television watching, fears and well-being related to television programmes, motion picture rating systems, and parents' conceptions of the educational role of media culture.

In addition, advertisements and representations in advertisement images, discourses of speech on the radio, and games were analysed in these studies. Thus, in this category, the object of study was not media *education* as an educational event or a field of study. From the perspective of media education, these studies rather yielded knowledge of the contexts and objects of media education. On the other hand, the studies approached media skills or the educational role of the media through media use or modes of media use from the perspective of analysis and interpretation.

A third category that clearly emerged from the data of this review consisted of research on the educational use of information and communication technol-

THEMATIC CATEGORIES / RESEARCH THEMES	
1.	publications addressing media education in itself , e.g. media education practices, the role of the media educator or media literacy skills
2.	publications addressing individuals', groups' or communities' relationship with media examining everyday media use and the meanings users associate with media from the perspective of human development, education or teaching
3.	publications examining media contents from an educational perspective , related to e.g. analysis of media representations and media literacy
4.	publications examining media influence from an educational perspective , related to e.g. media and power, and protection from the media
5.	publications related to extensive media-educational research perspectives , e.g. information society, active citizenship, and the educational role of media culture
6.	publications investigating the educational use of information and communication technology (ICT) , related to e.g. implementation of a new teaching technology and its possibilities to promote learning at school

Table 4. Topics addressed in publications related to media education.

ogy. In this category, research topics were often related to e.g. e-teaching or implementation of a new teaching and learning technology, for example a smart board or a mobile device, in an educational context. Unlike the previous categories, these studies on educational use of information and communication technology (ICT) did not primarily refer to media education or media literacy as terms or concepts. Research on the educational use of information and communication technology also forms a strong research area on its own, operating within the framework of learning theories and research on learning.

Different conceptions of the definitions of media education, media education research, and media—which can lead to different understandings of what belongs to the research area of media education—influenced the organisation of the publications into categories by object of study. One of the core questions that emerged already during the data selection stage was whether we should talk about research *related to media education*, which takes into account different definitions of media education, or research *on media education*, which investigates media education *in itself, an sich*. When working on this review, a question that required a great deal of thought was how to understand the relationship between research on the educational use of information and communication technology (ICT) and media education research because the educational use of information and communication technology is not actually addressed through concepts related to media education. Moreover, keywords related to media education seldom result ICT research in the database. In comparison with research on media education, a great deal of research on the educational use of information and communication technology has been conducted in Finland, and ICT research can also be regarded as an independent research area based on educational sciences. However, in this review, ICT research was included in media education-related research. It is, however, worth noting that

it is represented in this review only to the extent that the keywords used during the searches yielded ICT publications in the search results.

The same question about definition and relation that emerged in connection with the relationship between media education and ICT research resurfaced with media culture research related to media education. This type of research approach focuses on media-cultural phenomena and issues, for example media use, media influence, and media representations or texts. The objective of such studies can be e.g. deconstruction of the mechanisms of media and media representations, or investigating audiences' conceptions or experiences of media. This type of research on media, which often represents a communication or social sciences research perspective, does not necessarily address media education in itself. On the other hand, the objective of such studies can be examination and deconstruction of mechanisms of media influence, which, from the perspective of media education, manifests itself as an activity involving practical application and development of *media skills*. In this review, research representing this kind of an approach, often incorporating perspectives of e.g. media culture, media sociology or media psychology, was included in the definition of media education research.

3.2.2 Number of Publications by Theme and University

A categorization of the publications by theme (Table 5) reveals that 23,7 % of all media education-related publications included in this report examined media education in itself. Nearly half of these studies were master's theses (university), about one-fourth were doctoral dissertations and another fourth articles. This research featured studies of the technology tribe, culture research tribe, protection tribe, as well as the critical tribe (Kotilainen & Suoranta 2005). The majority of the studies addressed media education in the context of basic education.

The publications whose object of study was media use, media influence and user's relationship with media and which analysed a media technology or some type of media content, or ones which examined media more extensively as a part of media culture or information society made up over one-third of all publications included in the analysis. User's relationship with media was the most frequently examined in master's theses (university), a total of 9,6 % of all theses studied here,

PUBLICATION	Quantity						Total
	Media education	Media culture	Relationship with media	Media influence	Media content	ICT	
Articles	11	2	0	1	1	3	18
Doctoral dissertations	9	1	2	2	1	37	52
Licentiate's theses	1	0	1	1	0	0	3
Master's theses (university)	16	5	12	4	12	31	80
Master's theses (UAS)	0	0	0	0	0	3	3
Total	37	8	15	8	14	74	156
%	23,7	5,1	9,6	5,1	9,0	47,4	100

Table 5. Number of publications by theme.

whereas media influence (5,1 %) and media culture more extensively (5,1 %) were examined only in a few theses. Similarly, these were subject areas that were dealt with only in a few doctoral dissertations and articles. The analysis indicates that media content was the main object of study in 9 % of all publications.

Nearly half of the studies (47,4 %) were media education research the focus of which was on the educational use of information and communication technology (ICT) or teaching technology. In this category, the distribution of doctoral dissertations and master's theses (university) was more even. Both made up about two-fifths each, whereas articles accounted for only one-fifth of all publications. In general, relatively few media education-related articles have been published, with the exception of ones addressing the educational use of information and communication technology published in international journals and other publications, which fall outside of the scope of this review.

Quantity

RESEARCH THEMES							
UNIVERSITIES	Media education	Media culture	Relationship with media	Media influence	Media content	ICT	Total
University of Tampere	13	3	4	2	5	13	40
University of Jyväskylä	5	0	5	3	4	12	29
University of Lapland	2	2	4	0	3	15	26
University of Helsinki	1	0	2	0	1	13	17
University of Turku	3	1	0	1	0	3	8
Aalto University	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
University of Vaasa	1	0	0	1	0	2	4
University of Oulu	0	0	0	0	0	3	3
Sibelius Academy	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
University of Eastern Finland	0	0	0	0	0	3	3
Aalto University School of Arts, Design and Architecture	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
HAMK University of Applied Sciences	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
Helsinki Metropolia University of Applied Sciences	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
University of Joensuu	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
Total	26	6	15	7	13	71	138

Table 6. Research themes of theses produced at institutions of higher learning.

When quantifying the publications, it is important to bear in mind that they may be inter- and multidisciplinary and represent many “tribes” at once. In this review, each publication was placed in only one category based on its main object of study because our objective was to obtain figures that can be examined in relation to the total number of publications. In case of some studies, it was not clear to which cate-

gory they belong because judging by the object of study, the publication could have fallen into more than one category. This being the case, the quantified data on the publications by theme should be treated as directional.

A breakdown of the publications by institution of higher learning indicates that the highest number of theses addressing media education in itself has been published at the University of Tampere, followed by the University of Jyväskylä in the second rank and the University of Lapland in the third rank (Table 6). The University of Lapland is the only Finnish university that has offered media education as a major subject during the time frame (2000–2012) covered by this literature review. Only two of the total number of theses produced at the University of Lapland addressed media education in itself, and the theses focused mainly on the educational use of information and communication technology. Studies related to this subject area were distributed rather evenly across the four universities that produced most of the theses in the field: 13 theses per university on average.

3.2.3 Research Methods

Another objective of the review was to provide an outline of the methodology used in media education-related research. The methods were examined for the theses. A general division of research into qualitative and/or quantitative was used as a starting point. The division was based on the main research data. Text, image and video data (including television programmes and films) were regarded as qualitative data. Text data consist of e.g. transcribed interviews, documents such as curricula and observation notes. Only research that employed a questionnaire survey as a data collection method and analyzed the data using quantitative methods was classified as quantitative. Research combining quantitative and qualitative data, i.e. *mixed method* research, included for example studies based on questionnaire data and interview data. In this case, research based on qualitative data only was not placed in the mixed method category.

Results based on data extraction forms indicated that the majority of research on media education has been conducted by using qualitative methods or by combining qualitative and quantitative methods (Table 7). Overall, the number of mixed methods studies was high, and in particular the majority of the doctoral dissertations investigated here employed both qualitative and quantitative data. However, it must be noted that article dissertations, which can consist of several different studies forming a whole, usually fell into the mixed method category.

Quantity					
RESEARCH METHOD					
THESIS	qualitative	quantitative	mixed method	theoretical	Total
Doctoral dissertation	12	6	32	2	52
Licentiate's thesis	3	0	0	0	3
Master's thesis	51	15	14	0	80
Master's thesis (UAS)	0	3	0	0	3
Total	66	24	46	2	138

Table 7. Research methods used in media education-related theses.

The only theoretical theses were also doctoral dissertations. The majority of the master's theses from universities were qualitative, but among them were some studies based on quantitative data as well, and master's theses used quantitative methods twice as much compared to dissertations. All three licentiate's theses were based on qualitative data, and the master's level theses (UAS) were based on quantitative data.

The informants of the studies investigated in this review were preschool-aged children (under 7 years of age), pupils in basic comprehensive education (from 7 to 15 years of age), youth at senior secondary schools and vocational institutes (from 15 to 18 years of age), students at universities and other institutions of higher learning (over 18 years of age), as well as teachers and parents. The conceptions and experiences of students in higher education on teaching, studying and learning were examined. The review indicates that media education or media literacy were not often investigated from the perspective of adults or the aged. The adult's perspective on media education was largely studied through the role of the teacher or the parent. One article and one master's thesis (university) addressed media education and the aged (aged 65 and over), a group which, together with adults over 25 years of age, was absent from the target group of media education research. However, this review focuses on the perspective of children and youth because one of the main tasks of MEKU is to promote media education of children and youth. Had the review included research on adult education, the figures might have been somewhat different.

3.2.4 Research Topics⁴

Peer-Reviewed Academic Articles

Peer-reviewed academic articles published electronically between 2007 and 2012 in Finland, addressing media education in itself, media literacy or the role of the media educator were relatively rare, and only about ten were included in the data of this review. Half of the articles put forward views on conceptualization, state and development of media education. The articles addressed topics such as conceptual limitations of media literacy (Sihvonen 2009), the absence of the aged from the target groups of media education (Hakkarainen et al. 2009), and the development of media education as a pedagogical discipline in the context of teacher training (Kynäslahti & Tella 2010). Similarly, different media forms and media content, e.g. the horror film and the horror culture of children and youth (Kovanen 2011), the art film (Oravala 2009), critique of TV series (Elfving 2009) and YouTube (Rantala 2008). The goals of formal education, analysis of media contents, and the educational role of media culture were perspectives that emerged in these articles.

User's relationship with media, which is here understood as media use of individuals or communities and meanings associated with it, was addressed in the articles from the perspective of parents of young children. In all articles, children's relationship with media was interrelated with the perspective of protection and media's influence on children, the topics being parents' conceptions of the educational role of media culture (Sintonen 2009), the influence of media use on children's well-being seen through television watching habits and television programme output (Paavola ym. 2011), and motion picture rating systems and discussion on these from the perspective of relationship with media during childhood (Pohjola 2009).

4 All references in this chapter refer to publications belonging to the data of this study.

In addition, one study investigated children, youth and media seen through library practices (Vehviläinen 2007).

Only a few articles published in Finland addressed the educational use of information and communication technology. These articles dealt with e.g. virtual group mentoring and learning (Leppisaari, Mahlamäki-Kultanen & Vainio 2008), the role of social media in supporting teaching in the context of teacher training (Niinimäki & Tenno 2009), and the relationship between activities and learning results in an e-learning environment (Nokelainen, Miettinen & Ruohotie 2009).

Doctoral Dissertations and Licentiate's Theses

This review indicates that for print and electronic doctoral dissertations published between 2000 and 2012, a total of nine address media education in itself. These nine also include the dissertations that have sought to enlarge the definition of media education and develop its theory and concepts with an objective to provide an overview of teaching and research in field as a whole, e.g. in the context of teacher training (Kotilainen 2001), on the basis of expert statements (Sintonen 2001), in basic education (Vesterinen 2011; Sintonen 2001), in pre-primary and primary education (Hautaviita 2012), and from the perspective of ethics of media education (Kupiainen 2005). The scope and boundaries of the present review are also based on notions developed in some of these dissertations.

In dissertations, *media literacy* has been examined at least through experts' conceptions (Sintonen 2001) and through the concept of *media language skills* competence (Suoninen 2003), in the basic education curriculum of literacies (Kauppinen 2010) and as an objective of educational use of information and communication technology (Hautaviita 2012). Media literacy has also been examined and defined in other dissertations on media education as well, but it has not necessarily been the main object of study. At the dissertation level, media education has been studied, in addition to the context of teacher training, at least in relation to music teaching (Sintonen 2001), environmental education in comprehensive school (Temmes 2006), newspaper in education (Hankala 2011) and in pre-primary and primary education from the perspective of media skill development in 6- to 9-year-olds (Hautaviita 2012). Only one licentiate's thesis addressing media education in itself has been published between 2007 and 2012 – A study of the researcher's own experiences of media education – “from practice to theory and back” (Niinistö 2009).

In only a few of the dissertations found using the criteria established for this study, user's relationship with media, media influence and media contents were examined from an educational perspective. The topics included e.g. young children's interpretation process of audiovisual media and examination of children's relationship with media (Koivusalo-Kuusivaara 2007), preschool-aged children's fears and well-being related to TV programmes (Korhonen 2008), as well as electronic games and risk playing (Salokoski 2005). A somewhat enlarged view on media culture was adopted in a study investigating the formation of meanings of television in children's everyday life (Valkonen 2012).

In dissertations, different media forms and contents were examined, related to e.g. electronic games (Salokoski 2005), television and television programmes (Korhonen 2008; Valkonen 2012), and, in one study, in relation to a radio programme and the discursive power of media (Alajoutsijärvi 2009). According to this review, two licentiate's theses have been published on the subject area, addressing user's relationship with media (Laiho 2011) and media influence (Salomäenpää 2012).

About 70 % of the doctoral dissertations studied here examine educational use of information and communication technology. At least half of these address

online teaching, studying and learning, in addition to which, use of e.g. play-based learning environments, (Kangas 2010; Hyvönen 2008), games and playing, (Bonano 2008; Issakainen 2008), mobile devices (Laru 2012; Tauriainen 2000), videos (Hakkarainen 2007), and simulator (Salakari 2007) in a teaching context has been studied. The context for these studies have been comprehensive schools, vocational institutions, and institutions of higher education in which educational use of information and communication technology was examined by study subject, in teaching e.g. languages (Alssen 2012; Taalas 2005; Tammelin 2004; Pollari 2010), chemistry (Perna 2011; Kiviahde 2005), visual art (Issakainen 2004), geography (Kankaanranta 2009), mathematics (Nieminen 2007; Ruokamo 2000) and music (Salavuo 2005), as well as in on-the-job learning (Tauriainen 2000) and in vocational education, e.g. in relation to simulation teaching (Salakari 2007). The studies were the most frequently related to implementation of information and communication technology or its novel use, as well as the changes in teaching practices and the teacher's pedagogical thinking required by the implementation of the new technology. (mm. Perna 2011; Valtonen 2011; Kangas 2010; Hyvönen 2008; Naarmala 2009; Mällinen 2007; Oesch 2007; Taalas 2005). The data these studies are based on have typically been interview or questionnaire data charting the conceptions, experiences and/or attitudes of teachers (Ilomäki 2008; Jäminki 2008) and students (Alssen 2012; Laru 2012; Mäkelä 2010; Lahtinen 2007; Vainionpää 2006; Eskelinen 2005) regarding educational use of information and communication technology or learning supported by such technology.

Master's Theses (University)

In the master's theses published electronically between 2007 and 2012, media education is addressed at least in the context of basic education (e.g. Hoosianmaa 2011; Lokinperä 2011; Heinonen 2010; Heikkilä & Hietala 2009; Töllinen 2008; Saunamäki 2007), in early education (Erola 2012; Ruhala 2010; Pääjärvi 2009) and as a part of parenting (Rinne 2012; Mustikkamäki 2011; Vähämartti 2011; Saunamäki 2007). In the school context, media education has been examined e.g. in relation to the "Metkula" media education project examining a web-based multimodal learning environment for children (Heikkilä & Hietala 2009), critical media education (Paananen 2010; Ilvonen 2008; see also Virkki 2007), music education (Heinonen 2010) and Steiner's pedagogy (Korhonen 2008). Media literacy and its development have been studied from the perspective of children (Rinne 2012; Mustikkamäki 2011), youth (Ihamäki 2010), pupils (Töllinen 2008) and teachers (Lokinperä 2011; Töllinen 2008). For teachers, the focus was on their role as media educators and their competencies as media educators. One thesis examined media education as a part of a journalist's work (Kakkola 2009).

In master's level theses, users' relationship with media, media influence and media contents were examined from the perspective of children and youth (Arola & Havula 2012; Autio & Rikman 2012; Malvalehto 2012; Siivola 2012; Hiekkänen 2011; Kerttula & Tikkanen 2010; Natri 2010; Järvinen 2009; Tuominen 2009; Arola 2008; Kirves 2008), parents (Kerttula & Tikkanen 2010) and the aged (Pensonen 2012). The studies addressed media literacy competencies of children (Hiekkänen 2011) and youth, children's relationship with television (Johnson 2008; Roos & Tepora 2008), children's computer and internet use (Arola & Havula 2012; Ihamäki 2010; Kerttula & Tikkanen 2010), as well as computers and the aged (Pensonen 2012). As far as media contents are concerned, especially commercials, advertisements and/or television programmes had been popular subject areas among students: Theses were written on e.g. television advertising (Kota-aho 2009), representations of fatherhood in

advertising images (Virkki 2007) and television programmes (Porkkala 2011; Peippo 2008). In these examining media content, the beauty ideal (Inkinen 2010) and the mediatisation of the fairy tale (Kari 2010) were also studied. Research on the web and social media was relatively rare. This review indicates that only two studies focus specifically on online content and communication (Kataja 2012; Kettunen 2008).

More than one-third of all master's level theses addressed educational use of information and communication technology (ICT). These studies examined the conceptions, attitudes and experiences of basic education pupils and teachers regarding information and communication technology (Alamäki 2011; Sokero 2009; Mäntylä 2008; Kohvakka 2007), information and communication technology competencies (Ikonen 2012; Kolu 2012) and ICT-enhanced teaching and learning (Juselius 2012; Virtanen 2010; Piironen 2008; Saunamäki 2008). The studies dealt with e.g. use of smartboards (Leskinen 2012; Pelho 2012), digital games (Mustikkamäki 2012; Saunamäki 2007), mobile devices (Keränen 2009), social media (Kuvaja 2011), videos (Okkonen 2012; Keski-Sampi 2007), and virtual environments (e.g. Ukkola 2012; Pihlajamäki 2011) in a teaching context and their role in supporting learning processes. Several studies also addressed e-teaching and e-learning or developed an online course or course materials (Lehti 2012; Savukoski 2012; Vaara 2012; Kuvaja 2011; Mäenpää 2010; Pitkänen 2010; Teränen 2010; Valtanen 2010; Heikkinen & Räisänen 2009; Kamppi 2007). Media education in itself was examined only in two studies, one of which addressed teaching and learning computer skills at school (Saunamäki 2008), and the other one examined pre-primary and primary school-aged children's digital game play at home and at school (Saunamäki 2007).

3.2.5 Doctoral Dissertations Addressing Media Education in Itself⁵

In general, research on media education as a part of formal teaching and curricula is characterized by the as yet unestablished position of media education, which manifests itself as efforts to structure and improve practices in the field through research. This chapter discusses in some detail what has been studied in doctoral dissertations addressing media education in itself.

One of the first doctoral dissertations on media education published in early 2000s was Sirkku Kotilainen's (2001) study on the role of the media educator and the conditions of media education in teacher training. Kotilainen examined teacher students' and teachers' conceptions and experiences of the effectiveness and implementation of media education in the context of basic education. Kotilainen approaches the teacher's media education competencies through the concept of *media competence*. Kotilainen defines media education (or media pedagogy) as *teaching about media culture and media that are often also used as learning materials* (Kotilainen 2001, 8). Kotilainen (2001, 49) states that although taking place outside school hours during leisure time, informal learning and socialization belong to conception of teaching about and through media – “the teacher must be familiar with the actual media environment in which the pupils build their identity during leisure time.” Kotilainen does not consider media education as an independent discipline, but one closely connected with others, the most frequently educational, communication and media sciences, the common ground for research being media technology, expression and interpretation i.e. media culture, and questions about human development. In Kotilainen's view (2001, 56), also adults belong to the target domain of media education.

5 All references in this chapter refer to publications belonging to the data of this study.

The topic of Sara Sintonen's (2001) doctoral dissertation is the musical possibilities of media education and outlining media education through expert statements. Referring to Suoranta and Ylä-Kotola (2000, 10, 56), Sintonen defines media education as an *intersection* at which educational science and media studies meet (Sintonen 2001, 83–85). In media studies, media form and design are emphasized, which, in turn, is connected with the art educational and aesthetic aspects of media education in the study of musical possibilities of media education. Sintonen suggests that, in this way, media can be understood in terms of tools and technological narrative devices and structures in relation to mediated content and cultures of media use and production. On the basis of the findings and expert statements, there are many approaches to media education, each defined by the science or the field of study that is in the background of each individual research context.

In her dissertation, Annikka Suoninen (2003) examines media use of children and youth, which she approaches through the concept of *media language skills* launched by herself. According to Suoninen, media language competency expresses, better than the concept media literacy, also very young children's interaction with media “--the way of using and interpreting media contents in their own life” (Suoninen 2003, 26). Suoninen states that media literacy is an important part of media language skills, but the strength of the new concept of media language competency, especially when studying children's skills, lies in its underlying assumption that it is possible to have language skills without having reading and writing skills.

Media language competency covers different areas such as awareness of different media alternatives and one's own needs and purposes as a media user – *the mode* of using and interpreting mediums (Suoninen 2003, 31–32). Suoninen sees her role as that of a media sociologist, and her dissertation does not address media education directly, but examines young children's and young adults' perceptions of media use, modes of media use, and meanings associated with media as a part of everyday life. However, the definitions and findings put forward by Suoninen make a contribution to the research area of media education.

Reijo Kupiainen's (2005) doctoral dissertation examines the ethical-philosophical basis of media education in Martin Heidegger's phenomenological framework and addresses prevailing media and technology relationships as they manifest themselves in the domain of media culture. The study positions itself at the nexus of technology and media philosophy, visual culture studies, ethics and media education, and it provides an overview of the existing theory and definitions of media education. The study indicates that in the strongly visual media culture in which we live, understanding of various relationships with media and active working on media images are conditions of media education. The relationship between technology and education is addressed extensively also in Tomi Kiilakoski's (2012) dissertation, although the philosophical approach is not explicitly linked to the concept of media education.

At the dissertation level, media education has also been addressed by Olli Vesterinen (2011), who examines it from the perspective of curricula and practical teaching, with the objective of outlining the subject-didactic dimension of media education in basic education. Vesterinen states that addressing, for example, the issue of media education from the perspective of information and communication technology in the school context is necessary in order to be able to take pupils' media experiences and practices into account when looking for pedagogically sound solutions. In today's media landscape, media competencies are associated, above all, with independent and active processes of producing, structuring, sharing and classifying information, opinions and experiences.

In her dissertation, Merja Kauppinen (2010) examines conceptions of literacy in curricula of basic education, and how these conceptions promote general goals and e.g. active citizenship. Media constitutes one of the textual environments in which reading takes place, but the results indicate that “the curricula place the pupil in a ready-made position from which to read and consume media texts, and, similarly, meanings are formed according to predefined patterns. -- Independent use and interpretation of media texts remains marginal -- and dealing with media texts in terms of active citizenship receives little attention. In the framework of formal teaching, media education has been examined at the dissertation level also in relation to pre-primary and primary education (Hautaviita 2012), newspaper in education (Hankala 2011) and environmental education (Temmes 2006).

So far, media education as a goal-oriented form of interaction or media literacy has been studied only a little at the dissertation level. On the other hand, doctoral dissertations published in the 2000s address media education across disciplines and educational levels, in relation to teaching work and curricula as well as in terms of theoretical background thinking underlying the field, both at the conceptual and at the philosophical level. During the past ten years, media education has become increasingly established as a concept, and media literacy has been established as a central objective of media education. Even though individual studies approach media education or media literacy from different perspectives, they refer to the same definitions of media education and seek to outline media education through them.

3.3 Other Research Publications Related to Media Education

In recent years, a great deal of books and other research publications closely related to media education have been published in Finland. When gathering data for this review, a wide variety of publications was brought to the authors' attention through university research database searches and other keyword searches, or through the status of certain publications as well-known works in the field. In this review, media education research was examined in detail only regarding master's level theses produced at universities and universities of applied sciences, as well as peer-reviewed articles published in academic journals or compilations. Thus, a large number of texts dealing with media education fell outside of the scope of this review.

Many of the publications that were excluded are significant in that they are concerned with definition of media education and raising awareness about media education, have implications for national development and political decision-making, and in particular influence implementation of various activities in practice. These publications would be worthy of a separate literature review, and this section can provide only a brief overview of them.

Monographs by experts in the field constitute one publication type that has a strong influence on how media education is researched and defined, but which was omitted from the scope of this review. They make up some of the core research literature of the field as university textbooks, research sources, and works stimulating social debate. Practical work done in the field as well as general awareness of media education is strongly influenced by expert statements that address actual practices by taking theoretical aspects into consideration.

Already in the data collection stage, only master's level and higher theses were included in the scope of this review. Thus, bachelor's theses and a large number of other theses produced at universities of applied sciences fell outside of the scope of

this study, although the themes of the omitted theses suggested interesting future developmental directions regarding research interests of students in different disciplines.

The expression “other research publications” was used to refer to e.g. publications of conference proceedings, barometers, project reports and accounts. The publishers include, for example, ministries and authorities (Ministry of Education and Culture, Finnish Communications Regulatory Authority and Finnish National Board of Education), organizations and foundations (The Mannerheim League for Child Welfare, Finnish Society on Media Education, Save the Children Finland, Foundation for Culture Policy Research Cupore), university departments, faculties or units as well as libraries or different actors in the domain of liberal education. Another publication type is reports and research done by companies and private actors, only part of which is freely accessible. Thus, it can be said that media education-related knowledge is produced widely across sectors, but this knowledge is not systematically gathered in one place to function as a common national knowledge pool or knowledge base of media education.

The form of media education publications is as heterogeneous as their publishers. The work classified as other research publications here displays a wider spectrum of themes and variety than theses and articles that mainly focus on basic education. However, as was the case with research conducted in academic contexts, also project reports and other accounts clearly focused on information and communication technology as their main research theme. The ICT publications relate to general questions of developing teaching and pedagogy, and they discuss the future of the school and diverse learning environments in a wide variety of ways. These publications have been produced by universities, other educational establishments as well as actors in the public sector. In particular, publications by various organizations emphasize the perspectives of leisure-time media use of children and youth and children’s and youth’s relationship with media, especially regarding internet use. The protection perspective is strongly present, particularly in relation to the possible risks of the internet and other digital media. The voice of teaching and education outside the school context—for example through libraries and youth work—is also more strongly present in reports and other accounts than in theses and articles.

Youth (aged 13 to 18) have been the target group of research less often than children (aged under 12), even though some studies deal with perspectives of both children and youth. The emphasis on young children in reports and other research publications might be partly due to the Children and Media Programme of the Ministry of Education and Culture. The programme has been active for nearly ten years, and it first focused on media education targeted at children under 8 years of age and currently its target group is children under 12 years of age. The programme, which has provided considerable support to tens of media education projects and studies, has naturally had an influence on what kind of media education knowledge has been produced in Finland. For example, the annual Children’s Media Barometer studies (Suoninen 2012; Pääjärvi 2012; Kotilainen 2011) have been conducted with the support of the programme. In research examining the educational aspect, focus is clearly on minors: Research on young adults (aged 18 to 25) and adults (aged 25 and over), let alone the aged (aged 65 and over) is, a few exceptions aside, absent from theses, articles as well as other research publications. However, this result might have been influenced by our decision to omit certain types of data from the scope of this review. For example, ICT research focusing on development of working life was omitted.

A list of all research publications examined in this review is provided at the end of this publication, and it is intended for researchers and other actors in the

field (see Appendix 3). Since the initial search criteria used for data collection influenced the quantity as well as the thematic content of the publications studied here, this list does not provide an exhaustive account of research done in the field in recent years.

3.4 Summary

3.4.1 The Purpose, Objectives and Data of the Review

The purpose of this review was to provide an overview of research related to (or on) media education in Finland because, to our knowledge, such an investigation has not been undertaken before. The accounts put forward regarding the amount and content of research conducted in the field should be understood as estimates, and it must be borne in mind that the individual studies may be based on different conceptions of media education and the related research. In this review, we sought to approach research on media education from a wide perspective encompassing different definitions of media education. However, it was necessary to set the scope and boundaries of this review, which, for its part, influenced the findings of this study and perspectives on media education-related research in Finland.

On the one hand, the purpose of this literature review was to investigate research conducted within a particular research area, and on the other hand, to set its scope and boundaries in relation to research belonging to other subject areas. A literature review allows for outlining a research area on the basis of existing research literature in terms of outreach and research perspectives. Furthermore, it brings to the reader's attention work and publications by researchers in the field (Hammersley 2004, 580). As is the case with all research methods, conducting a systematic review requires choices regarding the scope and criteria for data collection and analysis, and these have to be justified and reflected upon with regard to the effect they will have on the reliability of the research findings. In this review, the methodological framework put forward by Hallinger (2013, 141–142) was used which puts emphasis on systematic approach and reporting.

According to Hallinger (2013), a systematic literature review consists of a standard set of stages that should be made explicit in the research report. Firstly, a systematic review must provide a description of the background, objectives and the related research questions of the review. As for the present review, the extensive discussion on media education, which has been treated in more detail earlier in this report, has influenced the background and demarcation of the scope of this study. Secondly, Hallinger states that the report must include an account of the practical implementation of the study and be explicit about the stages and criteria governing data collection, data selection and analysis. For the scope of this review, criteria and boundaries were established which influenced the selection of publications for this review and the type of information collected about them for analysis.

The data of this review consisted mainly of research publications, and the searches performed were mainly targeted at Finnish master's level and higher academic theses and peer-reviewed articles. This was done because examining theses in particular made it possible to see the distribution of media education research by theme and by university—where and from what perspectives media education research is being conducted in Finland. Doctoral dissertations and in particular peer-reviewed articles can be seen as research publications that may influence the development of the concepts, theory formation, and the research area of media

education. Peer-reviewed articles are traditionally regarded as the most important form of academic publication and as such the most important forum for presenting research findings and participating in academic discussion. However, articles published in international journals were excluded from the scope of this review because its primary objective was to examine discussion on media education in the Finnish context.

Our aim was to gather data as representative of Finnish media education research as possible. However, it is estimated that in addition to the academic articles and theses collected for the purposes of this review, a great deal of other writings, articles, conference papers and chapters have been published that might be equally relevant to media education research and practice. However, due to the limited scope of this study, it was not possible to examine the entire body of media education-related research. In addition to the theses and articles examined in this review, we decided to include a brief overview of other research publications, e.g. barometers, project and other reports in this review.

In addition to publication type, the data were selected in terms of content, on the basis of keywords and the theoretical framework of the study. Research on game design, work or working life-related research, as well as research on use of information and communication technology for other purposes than study of teaching, learning or learning processes was excluded from the scope of this review. For example, the latter can be understood as studies focusing on use of information and communication technology in order to develop the technological infrastructure of an educational establishment. In this review, the starting point for media education-related research was that the research includes perspectives of media as well as education or development of individuals, groups or communities. However, the perspectives could be implicitly intertwined so that the study did not specifically address media education in itself, or media and education, but e.g. the role of media in education or the influence of media on development or conceptions of society and culture.

The data included many publications the relation of which to media education was by no means straightforward and which could equally well have been attributed to some other research area. For the purposes of this review, the decision whether or not to classify a publication as media education-related research was made jointly among the authors of this review based on an estimate of the extent to which the study could be seen to adhere to the objectives of media education, and on the basis of the theoretical framework used to approach the research topic. Thus, the demarcation of the scope of the research area of media education applies only to the data examined in this review, and it is possible to set the scope of the research area in different way as well.

3.4.2 Key Research Findings

The literature review indicates that, overall, more media education-related research is being conducted than was initially assumed, especially when taking academic theses into account. After setting the data selection criteria, a total of 52 print and electronic doctoral dissertations, 80 academic master's level theses or thesis abstracts, and 18 electronically available articles related to media education were included in the analysis. Despite the large body of publications examined here, a closer analysis reveals that media education in itself has been studied relatively little in the light of empirical data. According to this review, 10 doctoral dissertations addressing media education in itself have been published between 2000 and

2012, and 19 master's theses (university) between 2007 and 2012. Only a few academic articles on media education in itself have been published in Finland. There is a scarcity of peer-reviewed articles published in Finnish academic journals, to say nothing of articles based on empirical data, since not all articles included in this analysis were based on such data.

In general, it can be said that, in the Finnish context, media education in itself has been addressed rather in expert articles or statements in books, compilations, different kinds of textbooks and practical guides rather than researched and reported in actual research publications. In addition, media education has been examined in different reports and barometers, but theory formation and conceptualization of media education is not the primary objective of these publications.

As a whole, the media education-related research publications examined here can be divided into three central research themes: (1) research that addresses *media education in itself*, (2) research that examines *media, media culture or media-cultural phenomena and issues from the perspective of human development or education*, and (3) research that is targeted at *educational use of information and communication technology*. Nearly 80% of all media education-related publications included in this review dealt with research on media and media-cultural phenomena or educational use of information and communication technology, whereas only about 20% of the publications addressed media education in itself.

Studies conducted from the perspective of phenomena and issues related to media or media culture were further divided into sub-themes, the most frequently addressed themes being children's or youth's *relationship with media* (9,6 %), different kinds of *media content* such as commercials (media analysis) (9,0 %), *media influence* (5,1 %) or, more extensively, *media culture* or development of information society (5,1 %). This division is, however, tentative because sometimes several perspectives regarding the object of study were present simultaneously. Thus, placing a study in a single thematic sub-category is by no means a straightforward task, and the decisions are based, above all, on the authors' interpretation of the main object of study and objective of each piece of research.

When examining the distribution of publications by research theme and university, the highest number of media education-related theses has been published at the University of Tampere, followed by the University of Jyväskylä at the second rank and the University of Lapland at the third. At the time this review was conducted, the University of Lapland was the only university in Finland offering media education as a major subject. However, the University of Lapland is oriented towards research on the educational use of information and communication technology (ICT), and this review shows that only a few academic theses and articles addressing media education in itself have been published there. The question that arises is whether this reflects universities' efforts to present their academic independence and specialization. However, at the same time, the situation may be seen as indicative of the fragmentation of the discipline.

This review reveals that relatively diverse topics are being studied in the research area of media education. However, in general it can be stated that the perspective of protection receives a great deal of emphasis, whereas only a small number of publications address e.g. critical media education and critical media skills. Research focusing on the analysis of media contents and messages and/or media influence often dealt with the traditional mediums of film and television, whereas studies on interaction with e.g. mobile devices and social media—despite the topicality of the issue—were relatively scarce. In research on educational use of information and communication technology, the possibilities of social media and e.g. network communication were studied more frequently.

One objective of this review was to find out what kinds of research methods have been used in media education-related academic theses and who the informants of these studies were. The results indicate that the majority of media education research is either qualitative or uses mixed methodology (i.e. is based on both qualitative and quantitative data). Only a few of the publications examined were theoretical studies, and as presumed, they were all doctoral dissertations. The majority of the master's level theses (university) were qualitative research, whereas the master's level theses (UAS) were quantitative.

The main informants were children, youth, pupils and students as well as teachers and parents. It is worth noting that studies focusing on the perspective of young adults, adults, or the aged (aged 65 or over) were rare. In general, the adult's perspective on media or media culture was studied through the role of the teacher or the parent.

In addition to the literature review proper covering academic theses and articles, a brief overview of other media education-related publications from outside the scope of this review is provided in this report (see page 27), listing different research publications such as barometers, monographs, expert statements as well as project reports and accounts. The overview indicates that media education-related knowledge is produced widely across sectors. The topics studied are also diverse, and the focus is most frequently on the context of formal teaching and education. However, as was the case with academic theses and articles, research on the perspective of adults and the aged was absent from these publications as well.

It is our hope that this publication will spark discussion on media education research among researchers representing different universities and other institutes of higher learning, different disciplines and fields of research and among media education practitioners.

4

Conclusions

Relatively little research is conducted on media education in itself in comparison to all media education-related research in Finland.

This review reveals that the body of media education-related research conducted in Finland is relatively large and inter- and multidisciplinary. Many kinds of studies addressing media, media culture, human development, education and learning about and through media can be classified as media education-related research. However, research on media education in itself is remarkably scarce. Some books and monographs have been published on the subject of media education, but not many of them are studies based on empirical data, and thus, they do not contribute to theory formation of the discipline or promote discussion on the subject in scientific forums (see e.g. Suoranta 2012, 19–20).

One central research area related to media education is the educational use of information and communication technology (ICT). This review indicates that the ICT research output is high in Finland and, presumably, internationally as well. The practical objective of ICT in the school context is to support learning processes through information and communication technology, and thus promote development of media skills. According to this literature review, studies related to ICT do not typically address media education in itself. For the most part, studies on the educational use of information and communication technology focus on the implementation of new teaching technologies, e-teaching, or teachers' and students' conceptions of information and communication technology.

The review suggests that ICT research can be conceived of as a research area on its own right, drawing e.g. on theories of learning, and closely connected to formal teaching in the school context. The research perspective of these studies does not treat information and communication technology (media) as an object of teaching but rather emphasizes the instrumental character of media. However, ICT can be seen as media education or a part of it. It is a question of defining media and educational use of information and communication technology in relation to media education.

In comparison to research on media education in itself, the communication and social science research output focusing on media is nearly level with that of ICT research. This type of research referred to as media studies does not necessarily examine education or teaching about media, but, rather, the educational role of media in general or children's, youth's or adults' relationship with media. Media studies seeks e.g. to reveal mechanisms of influence at work in media, which, from

the perspective of media education, can be associated with development of media skills and the educational role of media. However, all research conducted within media studies is not necessarily related to media education, although media studies may be seen as yielding knowledge and media education materials for media education practitioners.

The purpose of this study has not been to demarcate the research area of media education in a definite way. On the contrary, this review confirms the conception of media education as an essentially inter- and multidisciplinary research area. If the objective is to structure and strengthen the research area of media education, the topics, purpose and objectives of research should be examined in more detail in relation to each other and media education-related research. At the same time, it is important to ask how this influences definitions and conceptualization of media education. Media education as a more unified research area is still seeking its form—depending on what is being sought after.

In media education research, objects of study are diverse and they are often approached through qualitative methods. However, more research is needed on media education in itself and its research methodology.

Despite the scarcity of publications addressing media education in itself, in doctoral dissertations and articles media education has been examined relatively widely, covering subject areas as diverse as ethics of media education, curricula, and practical media education in the school context. However, these studies focus mainly on formal teaching and education, whereas media education as a part of family education, club activities or youth work have been studied only sporadically.

Suoranta (2012, 20), who has provided a rough outline of the current state of educational sciences in Finland, argues that educational science has been reduced to educational science of professionals, i.e. educationists' speech among themselves, or research that serves the purposes of the state apparatus, or "the system", whereby public and critical educational science is marginalized. The majority of media education-related studies examined in the present review also fall into the category of research that serves the purposes of the system and deals with e.g. development of new and effective teaching and learning methods. Even though empowerment as an objective has a highly visible role both in theory and practice of media education, critical starting points and objectives were rare in the theses and articles studied here.

The majority of the studies were qualitative, based on interview or text data, or mixed-method studies combining qualitative and quantitative methods. Some quantitative studies were also present. The informants of the studies were pre-school-aged children (aged under 7), pupils in basic comprehensive education (aged 7 to 15), youth at senior secondary schools and vocational institutes (aged 15 to 18), students at institutes of higher education (aged 18 and over) as well as teachers and parents. The adult's perspective on media or media culture was largely studied through the role of the teacher or the parent. One article and one master's thesis (university) addressed media education and the aged (aged 65 and over), which, alongside adults aged 25 years and over, was a target group largely absent from media education research.

This literature review revealed that methodological questions related to media education research were the main object of study in only one article. According to this review, the main methods of media education-related research are, for exam-

ple, qualitative methods suitable for examining learning, experiences and conceptions, analysis methods targeted at analysis of visual, auditive and textual multimedia contents, as well as audience research methods when examining e.g. the effectiveness of media or media education in different age and population groups.

This review indicates that there is a need for more media education research, particularly articles investigating media education in itself on the basis of empirical data. Further research on e.g. pedagogy of media education *an sich*, informal learning about media, the educational role of media, and methodological choices of media education research would be welcome.

Furthermore, increased interdisciplinary research cooperation should be called for in relation to media education. Although the majority of media education research is conducted within educational sciences, the research area is quintessentially multidisciplinary. However, the data examined in this review indicate that interdisciplinary research on media education has been rare.

In the media education research area there is a need for discussion on concepts related to media education and more uniform research and publishing practices.

When outlining the scope of this review for the purposes of data collection, the inter- and multidisciplinary character of the research area, different definitions and perspectives, as well as lack of conceptual clarity presented a challenge. Even the preliminary data collection stage was not without its obstacles, since not all research clearly relevant to media education is necessarily findable using keywords such as media education or media literacy. In particular, in studies examining practical educational work or related plans of activity, media education may constitute one aspect of a larger whole but it is not the main research theme.

Research related to media education has been published in many different research areas and in different types of publications, and there is no publication series or an academic journal specifically designed as a forum for discussing media education. In addition, it must be noted that a review with a main focus on electronically available academic articles and theses does not encompass research that is not accessible online, referencing at least an electronically-available abstract. For this reason, comprehensive and functional research databases of universities are a condition for effortless use and sharing of research knowledge.

The central concepts and terms used in different studies presented another challenge to data collection because they did not always make explicit whether the study is related to media education or not. However, these concepts or keywords function as cues for finding research on the subject in database searches. If they are not representative of the content of the study, the publication in question might not be findable. Based on the media education-related data searches performed for the purposes of this review, it is assumed that at least some publications might have been left out of this study for this particular reason. Especially in research on practical educational work or related plans of activity, media education may constitute one aspect of a larger whole but it is not the main theme of the study.

The present review suggests that the synergy of the research area of media education could be further enhanced by bringing clarity to research and publishing practices. In particular for students at the master's level, general instructions and practical guidelines for preparing work for publication might be welcome. This concerns both Finnish and international academic journals to which researchers are encouraged to submit articles on their research area.

Another point that emerges from this study is the need to conduct a meta-synthesis covering the main research methods and approaches, concepts or terminology and theoretical starting points of media education. If we are to conceive of media education as a research area on its own right, some degree of structuring based on existing research is necessary in order to be able to identify what exactly constitutes the research area of media education in relation to media and education research as a whole. In practice, media education as an educational or a teaching-studying-learning process is strongly interlinked with educational sciences, but, on the other hand, when examined from the perspective of media culture, media and communication studies or, say, sociology, the research traditions and perspectives are different. ■

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APPENDICES

1. Data extraction form used for collecting information on the publications.

Publication type (article/ dissertation / master's thesis): _____

Publication source data: _____

University + faculty + subject (/other source, e.g. Board of Education, ministry, organization):

Keywords: _____

Data and research methods

– From whom / from where data have been collected (e.g. children / teachers / parents / curricula): _____

– Data collection methods (e.g. questionnaires / observations / interviews):

– Qualitative (text data here!) / quantitative / mixed method / theoretical:

What is studied (e.g. pedagogy / user's relationship with media / media use / technological possibilities in teaching / discourses): _____

Research questions: _____

Main findings: _____

2. (Part of English names of the publications are unauthorized translations)

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