

Junior and Senior Academy



Project summary

Junior and Senior Academy (JASA) is an all-day event organized by the Faculty of Mass Media Communication, University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava (Slovakia) and IMEC – International Media Education Centre, which is part of the faculty. The aim is to create a suitable concept for the development of seniors' media literacy, intergenerational dialogue and sharing of both media and life experience with the teenager generation. In the pilot version of the all-day event, six related junior-senior pairs participated (grandson/granddaughter and grandmother/grandfather). The pairs went through a series of tasks focused on developing media skills and getting to know the media world. The project follows extensive research on the media literacy level of Slovak seniors. Concerning enhancing seniors' media competencies, the project benefits from previous work in the University of the Third Age in the media education program.

Aims

- Support of intergenerational relations between grandparents and their grandchildren by raising their awareness of critical and conscious use of various media
- Exchange of experience between juniors and seniors in relation to reasonable and ethical behavior both in the Internet world and real life

Target group(s): grandparents (aged 55+) and their grandchildren (aged 10-19 years)

Media: TV, video, photography, Internet, smartphones, tablets, radio

Methods: An all-day event designed as an excursion into the media world; a combination of learning-by-doing and a social learning process

Duration of project: one day

Resources needed: Depending on the number of tasks, approx. 12-13 lecturers are required (teachers, postgraduate students or skilled volunteers)

Project description

Junior and Senior Academy (JASA) is an all-day event that aims to create a suitable environment for seniors' media literacy development. The means to create and develop such literacy is intergenerational dialogue and relationship-building with the teenage generation. Six junior-senior pairs participated in the pilot version of the all-day event. The participants had to be related: grandson/granddaughter and his/her grandmother/grandfather.

The junior group consisted of students from the Angela Merici secondary grammar school in Trnava (Slovakia). The organizers have been cooperating with this school in the area of media education for a long time. Students interested in the project convinced their grandparents to participate with them in an interesting event in a modern multimedia HD studio run by the Faculty of Mass Media Communication UCM in Trnava. The studio was established through EU structural funds. It is fully and professionally equipped with technology and devices from all spheres of the media news world (TV studio, editing room, production, radio studios, photography atelier, editorial board of a print medium, and media archive).

Teachers and postgraduate students prepared for these junior-senior pairs (i.e. grandparent with his/her grandchild) an all-day program designed as an excursion into the media world. The task for all the pairs was to participate in all 11 stations

located in the building, which houses individual parts of the multimedia HD studio. At each station the pairs were expected to complete together a series of interesting, creative tasks.

Activities at the individual stations were designed to promote team spirit and to draw out the potential of the intergenerational share of information and skills related to the media world. Our research on media literacy with seniors and teenagers, which we carried out in 2013, found that the media competencies of these two groups are significantly different. Seniors have rich experience with traditional media (TV, radio, print media, etc), while the junior generation is exceptionally skilful in and has rich user experience with digital media.

In the JASA project we decided to use the media experiences of both age groups and inspired them to share them with each other. In our research, we found out that both seniors and juniors have serious deficiencies in terms of taking a critical approach to media and evaluating content. Thus the ambition of the JASA project is to provoke discussion in both groups about the world of media and their influence on individuals and society in general.

Method(s)

A combination of learning-by-doing and the social learning process is used in the JASA project. Grandparents and their grandchildren learn mutual communication, how to solve various problem situations, and how to share their experience and emotions. Together they participate in creating various media products, get acquainted with the work in a TV and a radio studio, and also have the option of getting a taste of the work of various media professions (e.g. cameraman, soundman, scriptwriter, editor, TV director, radio host, reporter, photographer, etc).

Exemplary description of one day/part of project

During the all-day event the junior-senior pairs took part in the following activities:

1. Media Quiz

In an improvised TV studio, a junior-senior pair took part in a quiz. They had to answer 10 media-related questions, with a balanced representation of traditional (e.g. TV, radio) and new media (Internet, mobile communication). The quiz thus stimulated senior-junior cooperation.

2. 'Our Recipe'

An independent fanpage on Facebook named JASA was created in advance. The task for the junior-senior pair was to write together in electronic form a recipe for a favorite meal, dessert, cake, etc. There was a digital camera available in the room so that the participants could also take a picture of themselves (selfie) and post the picture along with the recipe on the JASA Facebook fanpage.

3. Time Travel

Each pair visited a room with randomly placed media devices from various periods of the last century and the early years of this century, chosen to cover various periods in media development. The task was to organize these objects on a timeline – i.e. specify a decade during which they were used. The objects included a TV camera from the 1980s, a typewriter, a video recorder cassette, a voice recorder with an MG tape, a floppy disc, cameras from different periods, an HD video camera, a hard disc, a tablet, and many others.

4. Radio Studio

We used rooms in the radio studio for this task. Each senior-junior pair were guests in a radio program led by a professional host. He had a short moderated discussion with the grandparents and their grandchildren. At the end of the discussion there was a short quiz; the guests had to identify the sounds the host presented to them; these sound samples were chosen to cover media technologies used in different periods (e.g. dialing sound of a corded telephone), the signature

tunes of both series and radio programs both current and from a few decades ago (e.g. well-known signature tunes of traditional media), and sounds used in dubbing (e.g. untypical sound such as that of a windscreen wiper).

5. We Confess

The aim of the task was to experience performing in front of a TV camera. At the same time we wanted the participants to share the feelings they had for each other – grandparents for grandchildren and vice versa. The seniors and juniors performed in front of the TV camera separately and did not know anything about the other's statements. We used such an approach so as to avoid mutual influence. A trained host gave each interview participant questions she had prepared in advance. We shot individual interviews with all JASA participants and used them in the final part of the event, when all participants had a chance to see the confessions of their relatives.

6. Writing a Report

Another series of tasks was oriented towards practical media production. The aim was to allow the participants to experience how a TV report originates, what it is influenced by, and what conditions must be fulfilled to present the report on TV. Each pair had to write jointly a report about the JASA event they were participating in. They were able to consult with a trained postgraduate student about any questions or problems they had. The student gave them information about the structure of a report, what should be avoided or emphasized, etc.

7. In Front of the TV Camera

Having written the report, each pair moved on to a professional TV studio. Their task was to perform as a presenter duo, and present their report to a camera, using a reading device. Trained postgraduate students and teachers assisted them and gave them advice on proper performance in front of a TV camera. They also explained to them how to behave in a TV studio and what rules to follow.

8. News Editing in Editing Room

With the assistance of trained HD studio staff, the senior-junior pairs learned the basics of writing a TV report and edited their TV report in order to be able to present it in a TV broadcast. They got familiar with the basics of using individual technologies and with the work of an editor and TV director.

9. Take a Selfie

In this task each pair was provided with two devices for taking pictures. Modern digital technologies were represented by a tablet, and older technologies by a classic mechanical camera with film. The senior was asked to take a selfie using a tablet, and the junior to use the camera into which she or he first had to insert the film. This task required and demonstrated the most mutual cooperation. Without an intergenerational exchange of know-how, the pictures would not have been taken.

10. Moderated Group Discussion in TV Studio

In the final part of the event, all the participants gathered in the TV studio to take part in a moderated group discussion. They had an opportunity to present and share their impressions and emotions regarding the JASA event, their preferred media, what they liked or disliked about media production, etc. The discussion also covered the question of how to avoid unwanted media influence. The recorded TV discussion they participated in was given to them on a DVD.

11. Awarding of Diplomas for Participation in the Junior and Senior Academy

In the final part, there was also a joint presentation of the 'confessions' that the participants had performed in front of a TV camera (see 5. 'We Confess' above). Seniors and juniors shared their experience and emotions, and the event organizers were provided with feedback from the participants. Finally, there was a diploma-awarding ceremony for participation in the Junior and Senior Academy.

What needs special attention?

JASA is a unique, attractive and untraditional event that should strengthen intergenerational relationships between grandparents and their grandchildren, and promote their media literacy. One result may be a reduction in the generation gap. It is necessary to take into account the proper selection of participants; they should be relatives (grandparents and their grandchildren).

Project implementation difficulties

The role of seniors participating in the project is to share their life experience and values with the generation of teenagers. The aim is to bring the pairs of grandparents and grandchildren closer, to enhance their media literacy and help them to learn to perceive media and the world around us from the perspective of different generations. The most difficult task is to convince the potential participants that the event is appropriate for them and that they do not have to worry about anything.

What could be improved?

Many seniors and juniors have serious deficiencies in terms of taking a critical approach to media and evaluating their content. Thus the ambition of the project should be to provoke in both groups more intensive discussion about the world of media and their influence on individuals and society in general.

Information about the organization that runs the project

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<http://www.medialnavychova.sk/>

http://youtu.be/facVSu_tJgw

<https://www.facebook.com/jasafmk>

<http://www.medialnavychova.sk/medialna-akademia-pre-seniorov-a-juniorov-na-fmk-v-trnave/>

Quotes of participants

“The event is a great opportunity to share experiences and emotions between generations” – Maria, senior participant

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