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# Challenges And Limits Of Current Student Magazine Production - Case Study

## ABSTRACT

The subject of the study is to review the current state of contemporary student journalism. The aim of the case study is to clarify the theoretical background and then evaluation of the state (challenges and limits) of selected student journals on the basis of defined attributes. Part of the authors' goals is also the identification of the most common errors and problems in the analysed school magazines. At the theoretical level, the authors define the main concepts of the issue, characterize the student media and the specifics of the creation of the media. Last but not least, the authors define the position of student media in the educational process and their contribution to education in the field of media education. Based on the theoretical definition of the issue, the authors' approach is to use qualitative analysis of selected student magazines. The case study focuses on six student magazines from six elementary schools in Slovakia, which are involved in a research project focused on material-didactic support of media education teaching at Slovak primary and secondary schools, as well as reflexive-productive media learning via full-time and e-learning courses. In the research part of the case study, the authors approach the journals via qualitative analysis in three defined categories: the content of the journal, the graphic aspect of the journal and the organization of work in the journal / editorial office. Within these categories, journals are analysed in several specified attributes, e.g. elaborated topics, journalistic genres, journal break, colourfulness, editorial process, editing process and others. The conclusion of the case study is to interpret and summarize the most important findings of the research and a set of recommendations that respond to the identified shortcomings of the analysed sample of student journals in the examined points.

## KEY WORDS

Student media. Student magazines. Periodicals. Media education. Media literacy. Case study. Qualitative analysis.

# 1. School magazines as instruments of media education

In order to gain a better understanding of the process of the creation of school magazines, it is necessary to realize for whom these periodicals are intended, what are their functions and who creates them, since the specificities and possible deficiencies in the creation of these journalistic units are derived. School / student periodicals rank among periodicals for specific groups of readers. „*Student periodicals are differentiated from other types of periodicals in their content focus, which usually targets a narrow group of students from individual schools. The form of school journals is mostly different from regular periodicals, since they have a low frequency and varied content.*“<sup>1</sup>

The difference in form, low frequency and varied content can be explained by the fact that students can afford to experiment more than ordinary journalists in terms of content. Students cannot compete with popular central periodicals in terms of finance, number of creators or experience. Student magazines mainly provide information for students, making them unattractive to people outside school. On the other hand, original and innovative topics from the local sphere can also be included in school magazines. Youthful courage also tends to motivate students towards being investigative.

Developing journalistic and media production at different levels of education is extremely important for several reasons. One of them is the development of democracy and free thought, which is also related to freedom of the press. Students should be given the freedom to express their opinions and reflect current social or local problems. Journalism and journalists are often referred to as the mirror of society, and the media reflect the society in which they are created. The student media should be independent of the school with the main task - to inform about its problems and activities.<sup>2</sup> In the past, especially in the United States and Western Europe, student media spread information about citizens' rights movements. For example, in the 1960s, many students were against the Vietnam War and presented these views through student media. It is a place for presenting political and ideological views, confronting feminism, war, racial and social problems.<sup>3</sup>

Another important function is to inform. School periodicals bring a lot of information from the school as well as the extracurricular environment, interviews with celebrities and much more. They also offer students the opportunity to participate in and be part of them, to try working in the media in various positions.<sup>4</sup> A. Tušer describes student magazines as a journalistic playground for students, a wonderful and relatively free space where they can develop their talents, ideas, energy, sensitivity, ferocity, organizational skills.<sup>5</sup> P. Herman, the juror of the *Štúrovo pero* (school magazine competition), also discussed the topic of the „journalist field“ or the place for the beginning of a journalistic career. He notes that in a school magazine, a pupil or student will learn to think as a journalist and learn the techniques of writing. He also mentions that the school magazine is a space for expressing opinions and to a certain extent, working there is also a matter of prestige among other classmates.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> TUŠER, A.: *Ako sa robia noviny*. Bratislava : SOFA, 2003, p. 29.

<sup>2</sup> BOWEN, J.: *The role of student media*. [online]. [2019-07-28]. Available at: <<http://jeasprc.org/the-role-of-student-media/>>.

<sup>3</sup> COYER, K., DOWMUNT, T., FOUNTAIN. A.: *The Alternative Media Handbook*. London, New York : Routledge, 2008, p. 232.

<sup>4</sup> BAUMANNOVÁ, B. et al.: Vplyv študentských médií na aktivitu a angažovanosť študentov. In *ŠVOaUK 2015 : zborník príspevkov zo študentskej vedeckej odbornej a umeleckej konferencie*, Trnava : FMK UCM v Trnave, 2015, p. 8.

<sup>5</sup> TUŠER, A.: *Vydávame školský časopis*. Zvolen : Krajská knižnica L. Štúra vo Zvolene, Bratislava : Televízia Markíza, 2005, p. 47.

<sup>6</sup> HERMAN, P.: Ako sa stať dobrým novinárom a ako vydržať. In VITKO, P. a kol.: *Štúrovo pero. Dve desaťročia novinárskeho talentu*. Zvolen : Krajská knižnica Ľudovíta Štúra, 2014, p. 189.

The specific role of student media, the practical acquisition of media skills, belongs to the media education portfolio, which we can approach from multiple angles. One of the approaches is the development of critical thinking as well as knowledge of the functioning and organization of the media, but also the real creation of mass media outcomes, which we are dealing with in this case study. In our case, it is mainly the creation of a journalistic whole in the form of a magazine. D. Petranová understands media competences as „*the ability to handle the media, the ability to receive and interpret media content, and actively participate in the media communication process.*“<sup>7</sup> In order for pupils and students to create high-quality school magazines, it is essential that they know and understand the functioning, nature, meaning and purpose of media and journalism. Students can get acquainted with the principles of the media world by means of real creation, so that both approaches are complementary.

In this case, D. Petranová talks about the concept of „learning by doing“. Pupils become familiar with a large number of influencing factors by developing their own media products and acquire skills that the theory cannot cover.<sup>8</sup> When creating a school magazine, pupils learn how to search for information and work with it in text form. They also include some graphic fundamentals, gain insight into the nature of marketing and finance, and improve overall creativity in inventing magazine content. Ms Hossová states on the basis of her nationwide survey that in terms of media education and creation of practical outputs, school magazines have the largest representation of radio or television broadcasting. If the school also does not have a magazine, pupils learn to write news or current affairs during Slovak language lessons and these are published on the school's website. Teachers involved in the production of the periodical agreed that publishing the journal develops pupils' creativity; they also learn to use specific journalistic genres and improve their ICT skills.<sup>9</sup> In addition to Slovak language, V. Kačínová also mentions other subjects in which pupils are able to realize themselves in journalistic work, such as the Art and Culture course, where they present their own media product, including a magazine or a newspaper.<sup>10</sup>

Students will also learn important soft skills during this creative process, such as communication and analytical skills, team work. All of these can be improved by the work in the school magazine. J. Kováčová and B. Brendza also draw attention not only to the writing itself, but also to journalism and editorial work. The aim is clear and simple – pupils who are able to create a model of the periodical and then, if the project is successful, establish a magazine. In addition, the activities in the editorial office should also reflect other publishing activities. J. Kováčová and B. Brendza include market analysis, marketing mix, creation of a working team in the editorial office, production planning through meetings and deadlines and marketing activities.<sup>11</sup>

However, N. Vrabec emphasizes that the aim of media education should not be to educate future journalists. The priority is to develop pupils' media literacy so that they can navigate the media world and critically approach different kinds of content.<sup>12</sup> Therefore, educators who

<sup>7</sup> PETRANOVÁ D.: Charakteristika predmetu mediálna výchova. In PETRANOVÁ, D., VRABEC, N. (eds.): *Mediálna výchova pre učiteľov stredných škôl*. Trnava : FMK UCM v Trnave, IMEC, 2011, p. 191.

<sup>8</sup> PETRANOVÁ D.: Základné smery mediálnej výchovy a ich charakteristika. In PETRANOVÁ, D., VRABEC, N. (eds.): *Mediálna výchova pre učiteľov stredných škôl*. Trnava : FMK UCM v Trnave, IMEC, 2011, p. 195.

<sup>9</sup> HOSSOVÁ, M.: The Use of New Media and ICT as a Tool for Development of Pupils' Media Literacy. In PETRANOVÁ, D., MATÚŠ, J., MENDELOVÁ, D. (eds.): *Marketing Identity: Brands We Love Part II*. Trnava : FMK UCM v Trnave, 2016, p. 332.

<sup>10</sup> KAČINOVÁ, V.: Media Competence as a Cross-Curricular Competence. In *Communication Today*. 2018, Vol. 9, No. 1, p. 42-44.

<sup>11</sup> KOVÁČOVÁ, J., BRENDZA, B.: Tvoríme školské noviny a časopisy. In PETRANOVÁ, D., VRABEC, N. (eds.): *Mediálna výchova pre učiteľov stredných škôl*. Trnava : FMK UCM v Trnave, IMEC, 2011, p. 140.

<sup>12</sup> VRABEC, N.: Ciele vyučovacieho predmetu mediálna výchova. In PETRANOVÁ, D., VRABEC, N. (eds.): *Mediálna výchova pre učiteľov stredných škôl*. Trnava : FMK UCM v Trnave, IMEC, 2011, p. 202.

lead school magazines should be aware that in addition to the product itself, it is important to constantly focus on concepts such as journalistic ethics, objectivity and critical analysis of texts and information that pupils have received.

In many cases, the specific conditions for the creation of school magazines rely solely on the enthusiasm of teachers and pupils, so in many cases, journals are downgraded after important students or teachers leave. Creating a magazine is also conditioned by the level of pedagogical knowledge of journalism, which depends on the interest of the teacher or pupils in this issue. Therefore, it is important to mention the basic principles of creating school magazines, which are universally valid and based on real practice.

Journalists R. Gehrerová and K. Kiššová wrote 13 hints for students and junior journalists. At the outset, before the school starts publishing, it is necessary to determine the basic characteristics of the periodical. It is important to define a name that should be memorable and philosophically related to school. It is also appropriate to determine how often the journal will be published in order to determine the production plan and the closing schedule based on the periodicity.<sup>13</sup> As we are still talking about printed journals, the editorial office needs to ensure production costs for printing. Either agree with the school management on the internal press or pupils find a sponsor or apply for a grant. At this point, it is also necessary to think about the cost and number of pages of the periodical. Funding raises the question of who should publish the magazine. It is necessary to clarify the relationship between the magazine and the school management. The ideal situation presupposes the independence of newspapers from educators, especially in terms of censorship, but achieving such a situation is not easy. The degree of autonomy depends on the understanding between school management, teachers and pupils.<sup>14</sup>

Another challenge is the composition of the editors. P. Škultéty reminds here that although the content should not be influenced by teachers, the help of a Slovak teacher and pedagogical supervisor is always an option.<sup>15</sup> R. Gehrerová and K. Kiššová recommend setting up the magazine accounts on social networks through which potential contributors can be reached.<sup>16</sup> It is advisable to publish the announcement also on the notice boards in the classrooms or on the school website. The online space will also serve to promote the magazine so that as many people as possible can learn about it and then show interest in it. Let us return to the editorial composition, which must be approached responsibly. The members of the editorial board must be motivated and also constantly monitored in the performance of their tasks and assignments. Gehrerová and Kiššová also draw attention to the importance of the editor-in-chief who should oversee the overall system of work, assign tasks and deadlines.<sup>17</sup> It is also important that the editors meet regularly to discuss not only the upcoming topics and workflow, but also to look critically at past editions of the school magazine so that both editors and graphic designers give feedback to each other.

Selection of topics is also a problem for many editors. Thinking of an engaging subject will give you as much effort as working it out. R. Gehrerová and K. Kiššová recommend following the events at school, conducting interviews with interesting people at school and in the city, processing news in technology, culture and so on or publishing pupils' literary and artistic work.<sup>18</sup> The magazine may also cover more relaxing topics and sections such as humorous

<sup>13</sup> GEHREROVÁ, R., KIŠŠOVÁ, K.: Ako založiť a viesť študentský časopis. In *Denník N, N magazín*, 2018, Vol. 3, No. 4, p. 44-45.

<sup>14</sup> ŠKULTÉTY, P.: Ako riadiť a redigovať. In TUŠER, A.: *Vydávame školský časopis*. Zvolen : Krajská knižnica Ľ. Štúra vo Zvolene, Bratislava : Televízia Markíza, 2005, p. 36-37.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, p. 37.

<sup>16</sup> GEHREROVÁ, R., KIŠŠOVÁ, K.: Ako založiť a viesť študentský časopis. In: *Denník N, N magazín*, 2018, Vol. 3, No. 4, p. 44-45.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

texts, competitions and quizzes, but also sports, history, graduation topics, etc.<sup>19</sup> Reading tips are also a good source of topics, so it is advisable to ask classmates and readers to send tips and suggestions to the editors, either directly or in a poll. There should be room for criticism in the student magazine. There is no reason to be afraid of open discussion.<sup>20</sup> The recipe is to write about what interests the readers.

In the area of graphic design, journalists recommend using internet manuals for graphics software. They recommend using beautiful, high-quality photos, but they should be copyrighted.<sup>21</sup> Therefore, it is good if the magazine has a photographer or uses photos from photobank, which provide photos for free use. However, the author must always be mentioned.

Finally, it is important to review the texts. Each article should be read by at least two people: an editor and a proofreader. Gehrerová and Kiššová also recommend applying for competitions where the editors will meet other representatives of school magazines. They have space to talk about the problems the magazines, get inspired, and learn something new based on the feedback of the jury experts.<sup>22</sup> Readers can also provide good feedback. P. Škultéty emphasizes the last part of the process, namely distribution. In addition to their own school readers, he recommends distributing the magazine in the library or other municipal facilities. He recommends that the editors exchange magazines among themselves.<sup>23</sup>

## 2. Research Objectives and Methodology of Analysis

The study reflects the issue of student journalism. At the theoretical level, the authors focus on defining student/school media and defining their position in the educational process and in the process of developing media literacy (within media education). The aim of the case study is to clarify the theoretical background and the subsequent evaluation of the state (challenges and limits) of selected student journals on the basis of defined attributes. The authors aim to identify the most common mistakes and problems in the school journals. The present case study is of a qualitative nature. A case study is an in-depth survey of a specific phenomenon or project in real life.<sup>24</sup> It is a qualitative analysis of specific cases (i.e. school magazines) performed to identify established attributes and assess their current status.

The subjects of the research are six student magazines from six Slovak primary schools.<sup>25</sup> These primary schools are involved in a research project supported by the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic (*project KEGA 010UCM-4/2018 - Material and Didactic Support of Media Education through the Media Training Center at FMC UCM*) Faculty of Mass Media Communication Cyril and Methodius in Trnava (FMC UCM in Trnava). The project is focused on material-didactic support of media education teaching at Slovak primary and secondary schools. As a part of this project, the Faculty of Mass Media Communication at the University of St. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava established *Školiace mediálne centrum* (eng. the Training Media Centre, ŠMC). All activities within the project are implemented through the

<sup>19</sup> ŠKULTÉTY, P.: Ako riadiť a redigovať. In TUŠER, A.: *Vydávame školský časopis*. Zvolen : Krajská knižnica L. Štúra vo Zvolene, Bratislava : Televízia Markíza, 2005, p. 38.

<sup>20</sup> GEHREROVÁ, R., KIŠŠOVÁ, K.: Ako založiť a viesť študentský časopis. In: *Denník N, N magazín*, 2018, Vol. 3, No. 4, p. 44-45.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> ŠKULTÉTY, P.: Ako riadiť a redigovať. In TUŠER, A.: *Vydávame školský časopis*. Zvolen : Krajská knižnica L. Štúra vo Zvolene, Bratislava : Televízia Markíza, 2005, p. 39.

<sup>24</sup> SIMONS, H.: *Case study research in practice*. London : SAGE Publications, 2009, p. 21.

<sup>25</sup> Magazine Aktovka (Primary school and Kindergarten of Ondrej Caban in Komjatice), magazine Jaško (Primary school and Kindergarten in Jasová), magazine Kométa (Primary school and Kindergarten in Kolta), magazine KUKAJ SEM! (Primary school Semerovo), magazine Školáčik (Primary school and Kindergarten in Veľké Lovce), magazine Žitaváčik (Primary school, Hlavné námestie 14, Dvory nad Žitavou)

ŠMC, which are primarily day-to-day courses (excursions) for participating schools focusing on reflexive-productive media learning and subsequently completing an e-learning course in media education. E-learning courses run on an interactive multimedia learning platform, which, in addition to media education courses for primary and secondary school pupils, also provide methodological support for teachers (the learning platform will be fully operational in autumn 2019).<sup>26</sup> The e-learning course itself is preceded by a daily attendance course, which is fully adapted to the needs of a particular group of pupils, depending on the media product produced by the school. E.g. in the case of school magazines, course designers assess the school magazine and evaluate its positive aspects and shortcomings. The attendance course is then built in such a way that the pupils improve their work and eliminate any shortcomings of the magazine. After attending a course and subsequent e-learning (duration of about 2 years), the creators of the medium re-send their outputs for evaluation. The evaluation committee thus evaluates the „improved“ media products and assess the creators' improvement as well as the benefits of the implemented activities. The object of investigation in this case study consists of magazines whose authors are involved in this research project and have attended a daily attendance course.

We evaluate the student journals by qualitative analysis. By this analysis we understand the established procedures of data collection and selection, but also the division of the examined object into smaller parts (in our case the examined categories and attributes) and the subsequent interpretation of the findings.<sup>27</sup> According to S. Juszczuk, in this case we can talk about the analysis of documents or results of activities, which consist of describing and interpreting the results of the activity. The documents themselves can be various printed materials, publications or even films.<sup>28</sup> In our case, the documents are the student journals.

The student journals that make up the research sample are analysed in three categories, which include each attribute:

1. *Content of the journal*
  - a. covered topics
  - b. Journalistic genres
  - c. Structure of the journal (columns)
2. *Graphic page of the magazine*
  - a. photos
  - b. journal layout
  - c. colour scheme
  - d. Title-page
3. *Organization of work in the journal/editorial office*
  - a. Choice of editors
  - b. Editing process
  - c. Dressing

The first category *Content of the journal* contains three attributes: covered topics, journalistic genres and the structure of the journal (columns). Within this category, we discuss the topics that the editors handle (e.g. school updates, city events, sports events, pupils' achievements, etc.), as well as how these topics are translated into journalistic speeches and in which genre they are written (e.g. short report, extended report, report, reportage, review, etc.). Last but not least, we focus on the overall structure of the magazine, ie. in which columns are journalistic

<sup>26</sup> *Materiálno-didaktická podpora výučby mediálnej výchovy prostredníctvom školiaceho mediálneho strediska na FMK UCM.* [online]. [2019-07-17]. Available at: <<https://www.portalvs.sk/sk/prehľad-projektov/kega/11545>>.

<sup>27</sup> SEDLÁKOVÁ, R.: *Výzkum médií. Nejužívané metody a techniky.* Praha : Grada Publishing, 2014, p. 397.

<sup>28</sup> JUSZCZYK, S.: *Metodológia empirických výskumov v spoločenských vedách.* Bratislava : Iris, 2003, p. 66-67.

speeches included. In the second category *Graphic page of the magazine* we focus on the use of photographs in the magazine, the overall colour (use of colours), the graphic level of the title page and the graphical arrangement of the magazine (column breaks, fonts, page template, etc.). The last examined category is the *Organization of Work in the Journal*. Within this category we analyse the composition of the editorial office, ie. we find out who is involved in the creation of the magazine, what positions in the magazine are occupied by teachers and pupils, etc. Furthermore, in this category we examine the process of editing (search and selection of topics, selection of journalistic and non-journalistic expressions, and creation of a periodical model). The last examined attribute is finishing, in the sense of final adjustment of journalistic expressions. At this point, we also follow the grammar and stylistic level of magazines. By examining the given attributes in each category, we get an idea of the current status, positive aspects and limits of the analysed journals. The analysis is the basis for the development of recommendations for improving the current situation and characterizing the challenges faced by student print media.

### 3. Results

Based on the set objectives and methodology of the research, we approach the evaluation of the results of the qualitative analysis, through which we evaluate the status of selected school journals and identify the most frequent errors and deficiencies in the school periodicals. As mentioned above, we analyse the research sample in three categories: 1. *the content of the magazine*, 2. *the graphic aspect of the magazine*, and 3. *Organization of work in the journal/ editorial office*.

#### 3.1 Content of the journal

In the first category we examine in more detail three defined attributes: *covered topics*, *journalistic genres* and *the overall structure of the journal (columns)*. The subjects of analysis in this category are the topics that the editors of individual journals deal with, as well as the way of processing them into journalistic speeches (journalistic genres). Part of the research in this category is also an analysis of the overall structure of the journals and thus their division into columns.

In terms of **covered topics**, in the student or school media we most often meet topics related to events and people at school. Thematically, however, the student media should also look at what is happening in the city in which the institution operates and thus capture the events of the immediate environment with which the school interacts. The balanced thematic representation of the student magazine (or any student medium) will fulfil its goal of satisfying the needs of its audience.

In the analysed sample of student journals, the most prominent are journalistic topics related to current events at school. These are various news and updates with the timeframe related to the periodicity of the publication of a particular magazine. Examples of such news are articles discussing school anniversary celebrations, events (eg educational concerts, ski trips, school trips, etc.). The above-mentioned journalistic topics are often followed by information about what is happening in the place where the educational institution operates, in the city, municipality, district or region. This information is in some way related to the pupils of the school or is significant in terms of the interaction of the educational institution and its location. In the analysed sample, we can find for example information about the local folklore ensemble, which is attended by many pupils of the elementary school, or information about municipal celebrations

and memorial days, sports events in schools and pupils' successes. Topics and content related to the teachers of the school are also strongly represented. Most often we can find interviews with teachers on different topics (e.g. revealing the private life of the teacher, commenting on current issues, etc.). An important part of the thematic focus of student magazines is also pupils' creations and free time, while in this area the magazines present mainly crossword puzzles, jokes, recommendations and reviews for films, music or various games.

The thematic units that are represented in the analysed sample of school magazines can be summarized as follows:

1. News and information from school life (current events at school),
2. News and information from the school location (current events in the city, municipality, district, region),
3. Interesting facts about current events or time period (eg customs and traditions related to the current period, holidays, anniversaries, etc.),
4. Interviews with teachers, pupils, prominent personalities (e.g. school or city visits),
5. Sports news and events (sports days, tournaments and pupils' achievements)
6. Pupil achievements (e.g. Olympics, recitation competitions, art competitions, etc.)
7. Pupil's work (textual and artistic work of school pupils),
8. Leisure and entertainment (recipes; crossword puzzles; jokes; recommendations for movies, books or games; polls, etc.).

The form of processing certain information, its content and form depends on the topic to which this information is related. Therefore, we are directly related to another analysed subcategory - **journalistic genres**. In this subcategory we focus on identifying the representation of journalistic genres in the analysed sample of student journals.

Based on an in-depth analysis of the research sample, we can say that in student journals news reports generally prevail over journalistic texts. It should be noted that many of the published news reports also have features of journalistic texts, which is reflected mainly in the personal interest and subjectivity of the authors. However, given that these are educational media that do not inform on fundamental socio-political issues and do not participate in shaping public opinion in the sense of social periodicals, this hybridization can be considered acceptable and natural.

In the student journals, short and widespread reports are the most common. The essence of the short report is generally to give brief information about an event, which does not clarify the context and does not look for the consequences. In the extended report, the author is approaching the context, giving wider information and enriching it (e.g. the statements of interested parties, etc.). In the analysed sample of magazines, the difference between the short and the widespread report is mainly in the extent of the journalistic presentation. In the form of a short report, the journals deal mainly with the aforementioned news and information on what is happening at school and in the city or town, information on sports and pupils' success. Longer reports occur especially when authors report on major events that occurred at a given school. These events are for example various excursions, foreign trips, big sports events and so on. It is interesting to note that on one topic, the editors often create more short journalistic speeches that observe the phenomenon or event from different perspectives. Thus, we often find several short or extended reports on one topic in the journals. This information could constitute a single, comprehensive journalistic expression (eg fictional reports - reports that are not present in the analysed sample). In student journals, polls are also quite common. Although we consider polls in newspapers as part of the so-called journalism, in the analysed journals, the surveys take the form of dialogical reports - news interviews.



The genre representation significantly lacks journalistic genres. Reporting and opinion genres (comments) are very rare. As mentioned above, more extensive topics are often dealt with in several journalistic speeches. On the contrary, some topics would require more extensive processing or processing in another genre. Compared to the rare occurrence of reports and commentaries, journalistic interviews are relatively frequent. These are most often interviews with teachers, and sometimes interviews with well-known or prominent personalities who have visited the school or city. The content of these interviews is mainly aimed at revealing the private and professional life of the interviewed person. They are relatively narrow in scope and their character is more informative than analytical and often lacks a thematic line. Another journalistic genre that occurs quite often is a review. The way of processing is more of a recommendation to readers than a criticism of works of art, which, however, we consider natural, given the nature of school periodicals. Reviews include movies, books, music and digital games.

To summarize the genre representation in the analysed sample of student journals, we can say that the most frequently occurring journalistic genres are short report, extended report, news interview/poll, journalistic interview and review. There are noticeably absent fiction reports (reports) or comments (opinions). They also lack eg. feuilletons and glosses, which are funny and readable, attractive critical genres and could be an interesting part of student magazines. In addition, the genre and content representation of the journals could be enriched by various photojournalisms, magazine attachments, listicles or various points of interest (e.g. articles on interesting information from various subjects). At this point it is necessary to note that the genres identified do not meet the criteria 100%. If we say that there are reports or reviews in magazines, it does not mean that we are talking about a report or review in the form in which they are known by journalistic definitions. The above-mentioned manifestations in school magazines often fulfil the essence of the same genre only by topic or content, but they lack the required scope, formal arrangement, lexicology and so on.

The final reviewed subcategory, which is closely related to the *subcategories of topics covered* and *journalistic genres*, is **the overall structure of the journal (columns)**. The division of any printed matter into columns contributes significantly to the transparency of the periodical. Moreover, if we divide the magazine into sections, we will in some way teach the reader where to find the individual topics, which will simplify the reader's orientation in this periodical. Equally beneficial is the division of periodicals into columns for authors. In fact, the sections define the thematic framework for themes. If the columns are missing in the magazine, if they are not labelled or incorrectly arranged, that leads to chaos and confusion.

In terms of structure, each periodical should have a more or less stable arrangement of content and thematic units; to have a stable model. In this way, the periodical can be divided into several thematic units, which should distribute to columns with distinctive titles. These units can be:

1. Title page of the journal
2. Editorial
3. Content
4. News - news, information from the school environment and its surroundings, sports, etc.
5. Topic - the most important topic (s) of a given edition of the magazine (e.g. 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the school)
6. Journalism - interviews
7. Leisure part (reviews, entertainment, etc.)

Half (three out of six) of the analysed journals contain sections, but these are not permanent and do not have a fixed arrangement within the structure of the magazine. In three school periodicals, sections are completely absent. In cases where magazines have defined sections, these are in a truncated version of the arrangement mentioned above. Most of the examined titles contain editorial (except one magazine) as well as content of the edition. News as a

thematic unit are mainly represented by short and extended reports and divided into the following headlines: *News, School Life, What We Experience at School and Sport*. Journalistic genres and speeches are concentrated in a section titled *Interview*. Other thematic units and genres are concentrated in sections such as: *Our work, Pupils' work, Laugh or Leisure*. The problem of the analysed student journals within the overall structure of the periodical is mainly a disorder. Mostly, there is a problem of an illogical arrangement of the individual parts. In practice, this means that one column is replaced by the other, and then the first one continues and so on. The content of these sections is often the same; columns do not fulfil their role and do not separate the individual thematic parts of magazines.

### 3.2 Graphical aspect of the magazine

A significant drawback of most of the analysed school journals is their graphical aspect. In general, the problem is the non-uniform style of arrangement and work with photographs. It is the graphic design that fundamentally affects the readability and popularity of periodicals. The main cause of this problem is the absence of a template and also the graphic design of the manual in the editorial office that the graphic designer would follow.

These include a model of the periodical, which is part of the periodical project - a pilot definition of the magazine in the fields of columns, content and graphics, marketing and content pages. One of the reasons for the lack of graphical level of magazines is probably the software that editors use for creation, as except two magazines, all magazines use Microsoft Word, one editor uses the Apple version of this program and only one magazine uses the free version of Adobe InDesign, namely Scribus. Editing programs are designed to solve many drawbacks in the graphic design of magazines, as text editors do not have these features optimized. We have divided the most significant and most common problems that appeared in most magazines into several areas.



PICTURE 1: A sample of so-called orphan, funnel, and column breaks (left side)

Source: Školáčik, Kukaj Sem, Žitaváčik (left).

The most common mistakes include the absence of rules for text arrangement, its elements in columns and uneven text alignment. Arranging any text material is based on breaking longer text into columns, making it easier to receive such content. Since the text in newspapers and magazines is too small and the articles were to be broken into only one column, they would be more demanding in terms of perception and would possibly discourage readers from reading.

Selected school magazines should be aware that the overall transparency of the page and thus the graphics are influenced by the subtitling of the text. This simplifies reading by dividing the text into smaller parts. Creators of most magazines should not be afraid to work with information blocks containing, for example, added information. The use of perex should be a matter of course, as it also attracts the reader's attention. The school magazines at our disposal did not adhere to a stable number of columns within the magazine or within one magazine page, which is distracting and not visually appealing to the reader's eye. Just the above-mentioned template designed for specific sections would solve this problem. Since the nature of texts in school magazines is mostly news, we recommend choosing three-column text break. Individual parts of the text, which include subtitles, perex, infoblocks, but also the text itself should have a solid alignment structure. The aim is to preserve the text as a whole, so the elements must be kept in line. The uniform distances of the elements from the background edges as well as between the elements themselves increase the level of perception and attention towards the content of the topic. A common mistake is the emergence of funnels that are the result of text breaks in a paragraph, typical of official documents. The empty space thus unnecessarily takes the attention of the reader, as well as the so-called orphan, which is an orphaned word, for example, at the beginning of the next column.

Editors also do not have a clearly determined fonts used in texts, so we often find different fonts in articles and headlines. This is a distraction from the content itself.

**22.** Otvorí vajíčko

## Mal'ovanie kraslic v ŠKD

ŠKD je našej škole miestom plným tvorivých nápadov, miestom, kde sa ľudia radi stretávajú, hrajú sa, tvoria, učia sa nové veci, zabávajú sa, alebo sa jednoduchou porozprávajú s kamarátmi, blízkymi...

Mohli ste to na vlastné oči vidieť v apríli, keď sme sa mnohí stretli práve v ŠKD pri super aktuálnej činnosti: maľovanie kraslic pred Veľkou nocou. Pozvaní boli rodičia, deti, učiteľia, ale i pani učiteľky.

Zaujímavé techniky nám predviedli pani Alenka Kodňajová: zdobenie voskom, ale i pani Monika Beľanová: techniku vrtania vajíčok.

Veľmi sme sa potešili, lebo účasť detí aj samotných rodičov bola veru hojná... Mnohí boli na akciu vopred pripravení, doniesli si i vlastné vyfúknuté vajíčka.

Samozrejme, vajíčka sme maľovali i rôznymi jednoduchšími technikami: fixkami, farbičkami, mastnými pastelkami a pod. Každý teda mohol tvoriť podľa ľubovôle!

V tento deň fungovali viaceré stanoviská. Ti, ktorí si svoje vajíčko vyzdobili, mohli si kresliť, vymaľovávať veľkonočné obrázky alebo sa jednoducho hrať.

Musíme sa poďakovať všetkým zúčastneným, lebo akcia to bola naozaj veľmi príjemná... Určite i preto, že sa i v malom priestore zišlo veľa prijemných a priateľských ľudí... Atmosféru dotvárala i nádherná veľkonočná výzdoba, ktorú si pre nás pripravila pani Alenka.

Pre maškrtníkov nechýbalo ani malé občerstvenie: kuličičky, minerálka, džús, pre rodičov sme mali pripravenú kavičku...

Na záver akcie sme si urobili pekné rodinné fotky a každý si mohol svoj výtvor víťazoslávne zobrať domov.

Ďakujeme pani družničárkam a všetkým akčiom za super zážitok!

**Pripravila: Veronika**

**Vyfarbi si!**

**8 pamäťových krokov radikálne otočí naruby spôsob, akým študuješ!**

**VZDELÁVANIE 21.**

Mnohé veci, ktoré ti ukážem, si možno prídu triviálne, možno sa ale nájdú veci, ktoré si neuvedomuješ, alebo (a dokonca zaskočíš... Myslím však, že je veľmi dôležité, aby si sa zamyslel/a, keby a ako sa učíš, čo najefektívnejšie. To znamená, že čo najkratší čas sa naučíš, čo najviac a čo najlepšie...

Náčtrnem ti jednotlivé kroky.

**Pamäťový krok 1** - Čo urobiť ešte pred dverami? Prečítaj si to celé tak, aby si si uvedomoval, o čom čítaš! Ak človek otvorí knihu (alebo poznámky) a hneď sa učivo začne dvíhať nadok po riadku, príbom ešte ani nedoštáť kapitolu do konca, nemáže pochopiť základ učiva. Je zrejme, že sa jedná o hupé memorovanie. To by si robiť nemal!

**Pamäťový krok 2** - Farby a obrázky Pamäť miluje farby a obrázky, preto v druhom kroku využijeme farby. Využi obrázky v učebnici, v zoľstie, farebné perá, faxy, vzýrazňuj si dôležité slová a pojmy. Naozaj nie je stratou času otvoriť si mapu alebo knihu s obrázkom. Čím viac obrázkov, tým rýchlejšie je učenie!

**Pamäťový krok 3** - Vyber si kľúčové slová v učive! To znamená, že vyľadáš slová, ktoré sú v učive dôležité a tvoria akúsi kostru učiva. Často sú v učebnici aj vzýraznené, môžeš si ich doplniť vlastnými...

**Pamäťový krok 4** - Urob si myšlienkovú mapu učiva alebo vlastný obrázok učiva. S myšlienkovou mapou sa ti bude pracovať lepšie. Budeš sa učivo učiť motonicky - pohybom.

**Pamäťový krok 5** - Povedz si učivo nahlas bez toho, aby si mal otvorený zošit Rozprávaj učivo podľa tvojej myšlienkovj mapy, obrázku... Počúvaj sa, čo hovoríš, či to dáva zmysel... Nie je dôležité hovoriť učivo odšlona došlona, ovsať podstatnejšie je rozumieť, čo hovoríš, tvoríš zmysluplné vety...

**Pamäťový krok 6** - Snyový krok je zopakovanie si učiva bez zošlita a bez myšlienkovj mapy, to znamená bez akejkolvek pomôcky! Ak je učivo veľmi ťažké na zapamätanie si, over si, či ho ovládaš tak, že si ho bez pomôcky napíšeš na čistý papier.

**Pamäťový krok 7** - Ak si niečo vyneschal, pomýšľ si sa, vráť sa k tým veciam, pri ktorých si zaváhal, urobil si chybu! Zopakuj si ich po prečítaní opakovane a potom bez pomôcky!

**Pamäťový krok 8** - Zopakuj si si to všetko nahlas ešte raz- celé!

**Zdroj (s menšími úpravami):**  
<https://bezbolestneucenie.sk/8-pamatovych-krokov-akym-studujes/>

PICTURE 2: Preview of different fonts of title and text in one edition

Source: Jaško

The colour matching of the magazine (headlines, column labels, highlighting of photo descriptions, perex, and other text components) should be related to the visual identity of the magazine. In the analysed journals, we did not find the effort to work with colours so that they are in an equal and related relationship. It is ideal to work with three colours or to adapt the colours to the topic of the article (eg autumn edition can be harmonized into autumn tones). It is important that the colours match each other. To solve this problem, there is a simple aid to follow the basic rules of colour combination based on the colour spectrum:

1. Monochrome: use shades of one colour.
2. Complementary: combining two contrasting colours - contrasts in different sizes.
3. Analog: selection of 2 - 5 colours adjacent to each other.
4. Split supplemental palette: a combination of one primary colour and two adjacent ones.
5. Triad: the colours are equidistant on the palette and divide the circle into equal parts. It is used more for pale shades.
6. Tetradic: choice of facing pairs of colours. There is one space between colours within the pair.

In addition to the right combination of colours, it is important to maintain contrast between objects. For example, it is not appropriate to include text (except for descriptions) in photographs, and vice versa, as we have seen in the analysed school magazines.

When analysing school magazines, we encountered awkward placement of photographs on the page. The **arrangement of the photos** copied the mistakes we described in the text even more intensively. It was mainly a chaotic alignment; the photos were not in line. The editors also placed too many photos on the page in order to publish all the material, which we consider negative. The photos are too small and it is not clear who and what is on them. In addition, there are no captions in photos that are particularly important because they are first read by readers and tend to bring attractiveness and interest to the topics. Even if the labels are present, they are not highlighted in some magazines, making them hard to read due to lower contrast. Photo imagery is as important as text content. They are the first to attract the attention of the reader. In selected school journals, we have found some major flaws in composition. In the photographs there is no use of the theory of golden section; often we could not determine what was the main motive in the photo, because the object was lost. Most of the photographs are either directed at school pupils or their creations where these rules can be used very well. Certainly, it is necessary that the photos should be selected prior to completion of the whole magazine. Important is also their subsequent adjustment, which may include the cropping of the photo or adjusting its contrast and colour.



addition to this function we also find there graphic designers as well. However, the role of the editor and proofreader is replaced by teachers, so that the pupils themselves learn especially editorial and journalistic skills.

**The editing process** always starts with the selection of topics suitable for processing. In this case, not only the pupils cooperate, but also the teachers themselves. The creation and writing of articles is the sole responsibility of the pupils, but we have also found in the periodicals several contributions written by teachers, not only those who work directly in the creation of the magazine, but also teachers who promote their activities through the magazine, such as extra-curricular lessons. In the sense of finishing the text, in all cases, only teachers are involved in this activity, which also helps the pupils to arrange the magazine.

In this case, it is important to note that in addition to normal editorial work, it is necessary for magazines to work on the transfer of experience and knowledge to younger grades. This will avoid repeating the same mistakes. In addition, it is appropriate to involve older pupils in the process of editing, in particular the finishing of texts, in order to teach this important activity in terms of acquiring media competences. Last but not least, the magazines should avoid the prevalence of texts written by teachers. The school magazine belongs to the pupils and they should create 100% of its content.

Next to mention is the **finishing process**, which is a grammatical and stylistic modification of the text. As the texts are subject to teachers' proofreading, we did not find a significant number of grammatical errors, except for misspellings. At the stylistic level, the articles lack a logical division to an introduction, core and conclusion. The information is not organized by logic, continuity and importance. Due to their low experience with written texts, pupils have a simple syntax, which is manifested mainly by simple sentences in large numbers in a row. Pupils do not use synonyms and words are repeated in the text. In this section, we also included the work with the headline, which is very poorly used in school magazines. Text titles are often primordial and have no informative value. They lack a verb and do not carry information that would force the reader to read the article further.

## 4. Conclusion and recommendations

The case study deals with the challenges and limits of contemporary student journalism. The assessment of the current state and identification of the most common errors is approached through an in-depth qualitative analysis of selected student journals. In the introductory part of the study we define the basic theoretical background, the aim of the research and the used methods. We analyse the students' journals in selected categories and attributes, paying particular attention to the content of analysed periodicals, their graphical aspect and organization of work in the editorial office/magazine.

Within the content of the journal, we focused more closely on the researched topics, genre representation and overall structure of the journal. In the subcategory covered topics, the most frequent are the school environment, events or people related ones (pupils, teachers, graduates). On the other hand, news from around the school, ie. from a city, municipality, county, or region were also present in the analysed sample. Student journals also contain various points of interest that relate primarily to the period of publication of the periodical (eg. customs and traditions in a certain period, holidays, etc.). Frequent topics are also sports news, interviews with personalities and information about the success of school pupils. A separate category within the covered themes in school magazines are the so-called recreational ones, which include pupils' creations, leisure and entertaining reading (eg. crossword puzzles, jokes, polls, etc.). The choice of topics is directly related to the form of their processing and thus the genre representation in the analysed sample. In this subcategory, we found that in student magazines, news genres predominate over journalistic genres.

The most common are short and extended reports, but also news interviews (in terms of polls or opinion polls). Among the journalistic genres, the most frequent are journalistic interviews and reviews. On the contrary, student periodicals do not contain other major genres that would ensure genre diversity. Absolutely absent are comments or feitons. In addition, the genres present in student journals do not meet the conditions and characteristics as defined by genre. Journalistic expressions in school magazines often fulfil only one of the characteristic features of the genre (most often thematic focus), but they do not have the required scope, text structure, lexicology, etc. The last examined attribute within the content is the overall structure of the journals, how the student journals are divided into columns and how they are organized. In this subcategory we have found that the analysed sample of magazines does not have a permanent arrangement into columns. These sections are arranged illogically, thus losing their importance.

The second analysed category is the graphic aspect of the magazine. At this point, we focused mainly on text arrangement, photographs, pictures, colours and the title page of the periodical. We found that the sample of analysed student journals did not have fixed rules for arranging text, photos or images. The text in most of the journals is not organized in columns or divided into paragraphs. Editors very rarely use subtitles and perex, the elements that clearly improve the clarity and structure of the text and attract the reader's attention. A significant drawback of the analysed periodicals is also the use of a large number of fonts, which contributes to the inconsistency and confusion of the graphic aspect of the magazine. A similar problem is the arrangement of photographs and illustrations. Although photographs in the periodicals play an important role and have an informational function, the editors of the analysed school magazines often use too many photographs without the necessary selection, which is detrimental to the overall visual of the magazine. In addition, many photographs have a bad composition (e.g., people shot from behind, etc.) and lack descriptions. The choice of colours in the magazine is closely related to the photographs and the text. This is a fundamental deficiency in the analysed sample. Editors often use too many colours to attract the attention of the reader, forgetting the need to contrast the image and text. At this point we have encountered problems with the clarity and readability of magazines. Similarly, the front pages of the periodicals had similar deficiencies, which most often lack proper layout, choice of colours, or the necessary information.

The last examined category was organization of work in the editorial office of the magazine. In this category we studied the choice of members of the editorial office and the process of editing and finishing texts. The teams of the analysed student magazines have an average of 8 pupil members. In addition to the pupils, however, the process of creation also involves teachers who perform the functions of editor and proof-reader. However, we have also often encountered teachers as contributors to the magazine, which we do not find beneficial. As part of the editing process, we found out, that teachers are significantly involved in the creation of magazines as graphic designers. On the other hand, the involvement of teachers is contributing to the relatively good level of grammar of magazines. The stylistic level of the texts has more significant shortcomings. Journalistic speech often lacks logical ordering, sentences that are too long or too short. Authors forget to divide the text into introduction, core and conclusion and so on. Working with the headline is also problematic. The subtitles do not contain a verb, they are too austere and do not serve its function.

Based on the above summary of the analysis of student journals, we identified **the shortcomings and errors** and we deliver relevant recommendations. In terms of the content of magazines, the absence of columns is a major problem. For this reason, magazines are often confusing and the reader has no idea where each topic is listed. A simple solution is to organize the content of the magazine into the following sections: *Title page of the magazine; Editorial; Content of the heading; News - news, information from the school environment and its surroundings, sport, etc.; Theme - the most important topic(s) of a given edition of the journal*

(eg 100th anniversary of the school); Journalism - interviews and opinions; Leisure part (reviews, entertainment, etc.). Another major shortcoming is the lack of genre and thematic variety. As mentioned above, in the genre, school magazines are mainly limited to news genres, especially short reports that inform about the school and its surroundings. Editors should therefore focus on the wider surroundings of the school, informing of the happenings in the city or region, and should process this information in different genres. Various sporting events, ski tours, school trips should be covered in the form of reportage. The genres of opinion should also be given space, e.g. comments where pupils could comment on current issues and problems resonating in school, city, town or region. Thematic and genre stereotype could also be enriched by various supplements to magazines (e.g. calendars, timetables, etc.) or processing of interesting facts into articles (so called listicle - e.g. ten healthy meals that are cooked in our school canteen etc.).

Text arrangement is the most common problem in the graphic aspect of a magazine. Editors do not arrange text in columns. There is no uniformity and fixed number of columns and text alignment in the magazine. If the magazine content is modelled in columns, these are too narrow or wide, causing funnels and orphans to be formed. The solution to these shortcomings is clearly the use of a graphic program. Although, these programs can be costly for schools, there are also free versions. By using them, magazines will gain clarity and form that will look more professional and at a higher level. A common mistake is also the use of different fonts in texts. When choosing fonts, editors should think in particular that the font chosen should be a permanent part of the visual identity of the magazine, but also that any other chosen fonts should be easy to read. When using photos and images, we recommend that editors think about the contrast that is often absent. The colours of the magazine are an important part of its graphics. The analysed periodicals often use colours that do not match. This can be avoided by applying the rules of colour spectrum combinations (monochrome, complementary, analogue, triadic or tetradic colour combinations). More attention should also be paid to the photographs themselves and to compliance with the composition rules. A good solution is to develop a graphic design manual that summarizes all the rules, including the model of the periodical. This should contain precise rules for creating individual sections and their placement in the magazine.

From a stylistic point of view, we see the most common problems in using dull words. The headlines of journalistic speeches are often meaningless and the speeches themselves are purely informative. In this sense, we recommend that editors apply the rules for creating headlines – e.g. use of verbs in the headline, outline of carrier information, attract the attention of the reader, etc. The text of articles should go deeper and below the surface of processed phenomena. It should be of an analytical nature and also reflect on the consequences and the context of the information to be provided. For a more varied and engaging processing of information, authors should use more dynamic ways of building reports (e.g. the structure of the inverted pyramid). The authors should think about the rules of legibility of texts, which means in particular the alternation of longer and shorter sentences, avoiding repetition of the same words in the article. The important is also division of the text into introduction, core and conclusion. Other textual elements that are absent in the current form of magazines could significantly help in the visual and content diversity of journalistic expressions, e.g. perex, intertitles or so-called infoblocks.

From this summary of the most fundamental and common mistakes and shortcomings of school magazines, it is evident that the editors of these student media face a great challenge. By their activities, they already undoubtedly contribute to the development of their own media literacy and fulfil many of the aims of the media education process. They develop their knowledge of the functioning of the media, as well as psychomotor skills associated with the creation of media content. On the other hand, their products have a number of shortcomings. Removing them can raise the level of their products and thus create a fully-fledged media product of



their own school institution, which will provide space for realizing productive media education in the school system. It is the building of media competencies associated with journalistic production that is nowadays a priority in several European countries (Sweden, Italy, Malta, Estonia), including Slovakia.

**Acknowledgement:** This study was elaborated within the research project supported by the Grant Agency of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic (KEGA) No. 010UCM-4/2018 titled „*Material and didactic support of the teaching of media education through the media training center at FMC UCM*“.

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