

# The Reconsideration of the Viewpoint to discuss Media Education

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In discussing media literacy education, it is necessary to juxtapose the dimension of media with the dimension of literacy. Crossing the dimension of media signs and the dimension of literacy sophistication results in education that resembles the video education practiced in Japan for broadcasting education and audiovisual education. Conversely, the ratio of information in video form is increasing. In universities as well, the necessity of education subjectively received by students regarding the expression and contents presented by video is growing. In this process, by flexibly implementing video education curriculum for communication related courses, media literacy education can evolve.

**media literacy      video education      curriculum development      class practice**

## 1. Awareness of the issues

The development of digitalization is increasing the acceleration of one-dimensional integrated processing of information and further amplifying the ratio of the video mode of information. In particular, the fusion of broadcasting and transmission has progressed, and diversified learning which makes use of the internet to implement searching has begun to be employed. Therein, video education curriculum taking the video information “user” into consideration was developed in 1997. Mainly, “integrated learning time” was implemented in elementary schools and junior high schools and experimental studies have been continued [1].

The frequency of employing video information in specialized university courses is on the rise. However, most students subjectively receive the expression and content displayed in video-as-signs. Experience in actively evaluating and creating output that compliments the attributes of video is extremely rare. The lack of systematic curriculum and practical packages can be given as one possible reason for this.

The Economics Department of Kanazawa Seiryō

University proclaims to “Educate business people for the good of the region.” However, recently companies are claiming to see a decrease in presentation skills among students. Also, many teachers claim to be seeing a notable lack of comprehension skills of nonlinear texts. Therein, in order to train the skills required for the subjective input and output of information from diverse modes, we ran a trial course in media literacy education steeped in the “sign” dimension of media and “sophistication” dimension of literacy.

## 2. The characteristics of new video education curriculum

Focusing on the characteristics of video-as-sign and based on the implementation of elementary school lessons, I developed a training program from the three regions and six proficiency items of comprehension, insight, searching, output, structure, and creation (Table1) [2].

**Table. 1 Video proficiency training program**

| Skill<br>Region  | Viewpoint              | Major Content  | I                    | II                 | III   | IV | V | VI | VII | VIII | IX | X |
|------------------|------------------------|--|----------------------|--------------------|---|----|---|----|-----|------|----|---|
|                  |                        |  | A-1<br>Comprehension | Logic<br>Intuition | •Characteristics of video structure<br>•Characteristics of montage<br>•Differences in impressions | ●  | ● | ●  |     |      |    | ● |
| A-2<br>Insight   | Inference<br>Viewpoint | •Making symbolic connections<br>•Viewpoint transference<br>•Changing ways of looking and feeling                           |                      |                    | ●   | ●  |   |    |     | ●    | ●  |   |
| B-1<br>Searching | Gathering<br>Choosing  | •Guessing the content from the title<br>•Extracting necessary scenes<br>•Choosing information from diverse media           |                      |                    |   |    | ● | ●  |     |      |    | ● |
| B-2<br>Output    | Mode<br>Composite      | •Appending of appropriate language information<br>•Expression combining symbols<br>•Expressing information in video format |                      |                    |   |    |   | ●  | ●   |      |    | ● |
| C-1<br>Structure | Technology<br>Planning | •Combining technologies<br>•Effective application of technology<br>•Surprising structure                                   |                      |                    |   |    |   |    |     |      | ●  | ● |
| C-2<br>Creation  | Analysis<br>Creation   | •Characteristics of information modes<br>•Structuring information<br>•Video expression of information association chart    |                      |                    |   | ●  |   |    | ●   |      |    | ● |

\* A = Receiver B = User C = Creator

\*1 package is 90 minutes

The ability of the receiver stresses comprehension proficiency. Also, the insight proficiency of intuitively penetrating symbolic scenes and sensing flexibly is stressed.

For the user, from the viewpoint of training information application skills, I rethought the skill items of searching proficiency and output proficiency for the process starting with information gathering and moving onto selection, combination, processing, creation, and communication.

For the creator, I set the ability to be keenly aware of the current conditions as the foundation. In particular, the ability to effectively exploit multimedia and assert oneself stresses structure proficiency and creation proficiency.

### 3. Rethinking media literacy

Literacy education has historically been understood from the three aspects of sophistication, functionality, and criticism.

Because the aspect of functionality has a tight link to

economic activity, it has conventionally received a great deal of focus. However, recently in the west, “critical thinking” has become a key word, and it is thought by some that the critical element, which espouses the idea of, “gaining the ability to critically decipher information delivered through media,” is taking an overly dominant position. Indeed, when information is gained through media, a certain bias is expected to exist. However, before focusing on such bias, should we not first question our own methods of interpreting information? It can also be said only when our method of reception is recognized as being relative will true “critical thinking” training be possible.

Also, when discussing the multiple concept arenas of media, trying to classify the concepts is perhaps meaningless in today’s climate. By handling the dimensions for interpreting media in the concept viewpoints of “one dimension media (signs),” “two dimension media (devices),” and “three dimension media

(systems),” focal points of discussing media literacy become clear (Table. 2). [3]

**Table 2. Viewpoints discussing Media Literacy**

|                  |                |          |           |
|------------------|----------------|----------|-----------|
| Literacy \ Media | I              | II       | III       |
|                  | Sophistication | Function | Criticism |
| A Signs          | A – I          | A – II   | A – III   |
| B Equipment      | B – I          | B – II   | B – III   |
| C System         | C – I          | C – II   | C – III   |

#### 4. Essential structure and characteristics of media literacy curriculum

In clarifying Japanese practical studies on media literacy education, three regions emerged. Furthermore, by listing skills by goals, a comparison can be seen to the skill goals of broadcasting education, audiovisual education, and information education (Table 3). The results show that the skill goals are extremely similar to those of Japanese broadcasting education, audiovisual education, and information education. Also, the distinctiveness of media literacy education also became apparent [4] [5].

**Table 3. Essential Structure of Media Literacy Education Curriculum**

| Region \ Skill                | Goal   |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Comprehending media           | <input type="radio"/> Know the characteristics of media  |
|                               | <input type="radio"/> Know the technology of media   |
|                               | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Know the influence of media   |
| Interpreting media            | <input type="radio"/> Know the intent of the sender  |
|                               | <input type="radio"/> Interpret the background and read between the lines  |
|                               | <input type="radio"/> Evaluate from multiple viewpoints  |
| Being critical of media       | <input type="radio"/> Be able to be objective  |
|                               | <input type="radio"/> Know the beliefs, position, and way of thinking of the sender  |
|                               | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Decipher critically from multi-angled viewpoints  |
| Mastering media usage         | <input type="radio"/> Gain operation abilities   |
|                               | <input type="radio"/> Be able to use multiple media formats separately   |
|                               | <input type="radio"/> Be able to use multiple media formats together   |
| Communicating via media       | <input type="radio"/> Know that the intent of the sender is decided by interpretation  |
|                               | <input type="radio"/> Be able to transfer information in response to the reaction of communication partners                  |
|                               | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Be able to conduct communication that depends the relationship with communications partners |
| Expressing the self via media | <input type="radio"/> Exploit media characteristics, use technology, and transfer information                                |
|                               | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Create your own opinion while taking in the thoughts of others                              |
|                               | <input type="radio"/> Be able to transfer original information   |

•Items marked with a ○ are skills that are important for audiovisual education, broadcasting education, and information education as well.

•Items marked with a ● are skills that are especially important for media literacy

#### 5. Implementation of media literacy education at the university level

##### 5-1. Course characteristics

Media communication theory is a specialized selection course worth four credits in the economics department. The two credits of the first semester are equivalent to media literacy

education (lab course).

##### 5-2. The goal of the first semester

By considering, discussing, and being aware of ideals for media appropriate for a democratic society (mainly video), thought and action for the growth of media are brought forth.

For that purpose, instead of being entirely focused on consumption which follows goals expounded from the aspect of media technology, the goal is an entity which sparks the growth of the democratic foundation of society. In particular,

while gaining the skills to consider mutual relationships between different information modes and express the results effectively, developing skills for the creation of diverse communication formats will be a goal (Table 4).

**Table 4. Lesson plan (themes and goals)**

|    | Theme  | Main Goal   |
|----|--|---|
| 1  | Orientation                                      | Be familiar with the course plan  |
| 2  | Verbalization of video                           | Be able to express sequence as “adjective + noun”   |
| 3  | Montage  | Be able to specify the characteristics of montage   |
| 4  | Illustration expression                          | Be able to combine symbols and express in a video format  |
| 5  | Reconfiguration of symbols                       | Be able to correlate symbols  |
| 6  | Analyzing website modes                          | Be able to specify mode characteristics   |
| 7  | Structural analysis of pamphlets                 | Be able to analyze mode proportions and specify structural characteristics  |
| 8  | Content analysis of pamphlets                    | Be able to unify information modes and specify content characteristics  |
| 9  | Structural analysis of commercials               | Be able to specify structural characteristics from time series analysis   |
| 10 | Technique analysis of commercials                | Be able to extract techniques and evaluate the results  |
| 11 | Structural comparison of news programs           | Be able to analyze news programs from different stations along a time sequence and specify structural characteristics |
| 12 | Video expression of numeric information I        | Be able to analyze numerical information and convert into a persuasive graph  |
| 13 | Video expression of numeric information II       | Be able to create proposals which exploit mode characteristics  |
| 14 | Promotion images                                 | Be able to create covers for proposals (promotion images)   |
| 15 | Communication via posters<br>(structural reform) | Be able to structuralize information via a KJ method type process and express an image                                |

**5-3. The fifth lesson (lesson name: Reconfiguration of symbols)**

(1) Cultivated skills

- Able to express sequence as “adjective + noun.”
- Able to correlate symbols and express as a structure illustration.
- Able to critique television shows based on structure illustrations.

(2) Activity process (90 minutes)

| Time | Learning activity  |
|------|--|
| 5    | Confirm the goal.  |
| 10   | Itemize things known about the “9-11 Incident.”  |
| 45   | Watch “How did the USA report on terrorism” (ETV special) (45T).   |
| 5    | Verbalize the sequence based on notes taken during the presentation.   |
| 15   | Via a designated holder, select symbolic scenes, make reconfiguration illustrations, and attach subheadings  |
| 10   | Consider the intent of the program creator based on reconfiguration illustrations. Send the notes to the assistant checker after finishing (Fig. 1). |

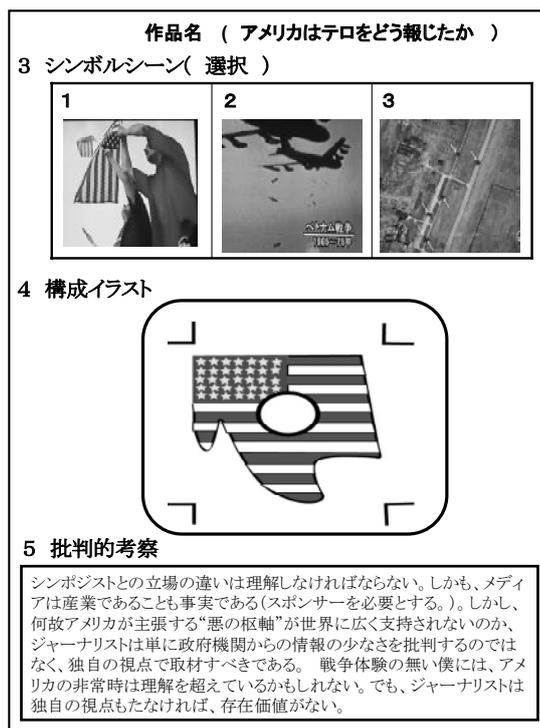


Fig. 1 Example of student notes

### (3) Evaluation and consideration

Regarding “previous knowledge,” “reconfiguration illustrations,” and “creative thinking,” the teacher and assistant teacher together executed a five step evaluation and notified the students of the results via e-mail.

Verbalization of sequence (adjective + noun) is one method for logically grasping creation intent and can be acquired as a skill with a few training sessions.

Though the selection of a symbol scene is an extremely intuitive process and has a tendency to result in focusing on a portion of scenes, it can provide assistance in intuitive comprehension of the creation intent.

Because a certain amount of inter-linkage can be seen between “previous knowledge” and “critical thinking,” “critical thinking” can also be called “reconfiguration of knowledge.”

Because there exists absolutely no relationship between “previous knowledge” and “reconfiguration illustrations” and between “critical thinking” and “configuration illustrations,” rethinking is necessary on the issue of whether or not a linkage should be formed in instruction between “comprehension” and “intuition” (Table 5).

**Table 5. Relation between previous knowledge, critical thinking, and reconfiguration illustrations**

|         | Previous knowledge | Reconfiguration illustration | Critical thinking |
|---------|--------------------|------------------------------|-------------------|
|         | I                  | II                           | III               |
| Average | 3.64               | 3.34                         | 3.28              |
| SD      | 1.11               | 1.00                         | 1.23              |

The correlation coefficient of I and III is  $R = 0.53$

The correlation coefficient of I and II is  $R = 0.07$

The correlation coefficient of II and III is  $R = 0.00$

### (4) Future tasks

Though package development is relatively easy, because most of the teaching material relies on broadcasted programs, accumulating them on the hard disc is restricted by copyright law. As a result of this, the versatility is limited. Creation of original teaching material requires an excessive amount of time and expense.

The curriculum is only a model, and it is necessary to discern which skills are pertinent to the situations of the students. However, because the region of sensitivity relies on the characteristics of the learner, systemization is extremely difficult [6].

## 5-4. The fourteenth lesson (lesson name: Promotion image)

### (1) Cultivated skills

- Be able to propose surprising structures
- Be able to express information of different modes in a video format
- Be able to combine symbols and express in a video format

### (2) Activity process (summary)

47 students divided into 10 groups, converted the results of a questionnaire (numerical information) about the Kanazawa Horse Races put on by the Ishikawa Prefecture Horse Racing Office to a graph format, and analyzed the characteristics (in the thirteenth lesson). For the fourteenth lesson, they were made to create promotion plans. The budget was set at ¥300 million. Requirements for the report were as follows. The groups were to discuss as a group, and create the required items based on the

results of the discussion. They were to create a list of media to be used and content items. Posters and event fliers were to be expressed via images. They were to create a three-month development schedule. The execution budget was to be within ¥300 million. The sales point was to be expressed with one illustration.

In class group representatives presented group promotion images. After presentation, following questions and discussion, the students could immediately check the results of classmate evaluations via an automatically processed questionnaire form. Students are asked to make project books by analyzing numerical information concerning “the Kanazawa horse racing” by making groups. When they evaluated promotion images by five-level grades, the third group won the highest grade for their promotion images(Fig. 2).

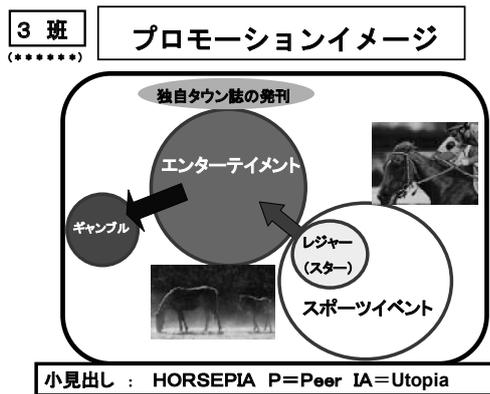


Fig. 2-1 Promotion image example

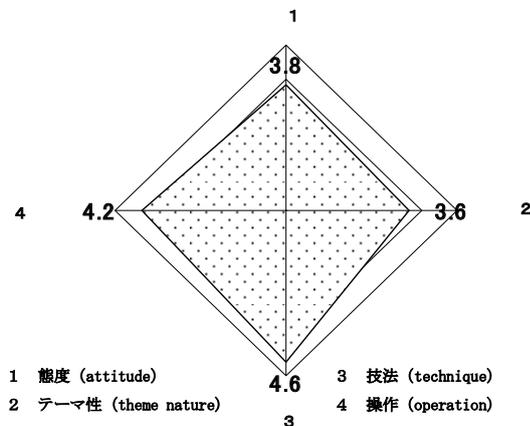


Fig 2-2 Results of classmate evaluation

### 5-5. The Fifteenth lesson (lesson name: Communication via posters)

#### (1) Cultivated skills

- With structural reform as the main image, be able to set a sub-theme and conduct gathering and analysis of related information.
- In order to enhance the theme, be able to process the gathered information in a KJ method style.
- Be able to conduct video expression based on association charts of the information.

#### (2) Activity process (summary)

- Made the students create association charts for key words related to structural reform.
- All posters received outside evaluation at a related art exhibition. The posters were created as homework, and in class we conducted presentations, questions, discussions, and classmate evaluations (Fig. 3).



Fig. 3-1 “Koizumi Gekijo (theatre) with no audience”

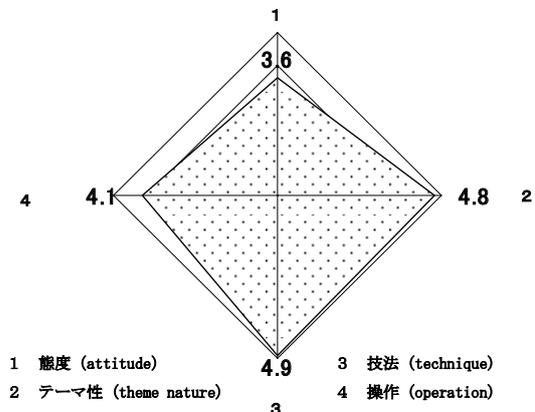


Fig. 3-2 Results of classmate evaluation

## 6. Experimental class to cultivate expression skills

Video and film are used as powerful expressive methods in all aspects of the realms of fine art, academics, and business. We will clarify problems for instruction in the field of expression for students who aim to become business people and consider the ideal for future instruction. For that purpose, we conducted a trial run of an experimental model class with a guest teacher [7].

### 6-1. Content and methods

- A person who has work experience with video and graphic creation is invited as the guest teacher.
- The experimental class is split into the two fields of poster expression and commercial plan, and conducted side by side.
- Ten students interested in the field of expression are invited as monitors.
- The lessons are recorded on video and after the lessons opinion exchange is held with the guest teacher.
- After the lessons, the transmitted contents of the interviews conducted each time are analyzed.

### 6-2. Course summary

(1) Schedule: February 20-23, 2006

- A Course: 9:00 – 10:30 Guest teacher: Mr. T from Zas Design Co., Ltd.
- B Course: 10:45 – 12:15 Guest teacher: Mr. K from FIX InterMedia Co., Ltd.

(2) Lesson summary

<A course: Poster expression> 90 minutes x 4 times

|     |  |
|-----|--|
| I   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Look at real posters</li> <li>• Analyze the messages of the parts</li> </ul>                                    |
| II  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learn the basics of graphic design</li> <li>• Learn the general process up to printing</li> </ul>               |
| III | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State theme</li> <li>• Explain the reasons for “things you changed” and “things you will not change”</li> </ul> |
| IV  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compare the first half and last half of creation</li> <li>• Critique each other</li> </ul>                      |

<B course: Commercial planning> 90 minutes x 4 times

|     |  |
|-----|--|
| I   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Website critique</li> <li>• Decipher messages</li> </ul>  |
| II  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learn the commercial production process</li> <li>• Propose catch copy that fits themes</li> </ul> |
| III | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create storyboards (4-6 pages)</li> <li>• State theme</li> </ul>                                  |
| IV  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Announce planned techniques</li> <li>• Critique each other</li> </ul>                             |

### 6-3. Activity summary and instruction points

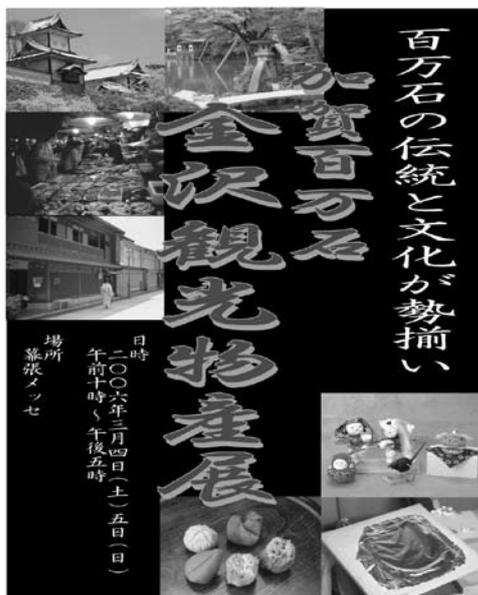
(extracted from interviews)

(1) A Course I: looking at and critiquing parts

The teacher sets a specific theme which is easy to represent visually and then provides representative symbols. The theme selected must be as specific as possible. Then the students are made to analyze and critique parts of the sample from the theme. Conversely, setting a theme which is difficult to represent visually is also important. In doing so, it is necessary to prepare highly abstract parts in advance. It is important to have the students experience both.

(2) A Course III: Creating a product

Instruction related to software operation is kept to a minimum and students are urged to use the help function as necessary. The most important thing for individual instruction is to ask the reasons for making changes or for not making changes during the creation process. When the reasons are vague, making students return to the stage before the change and having them think at that stage is effective. Also, even for cases where absolutely no changes are implemented, asking the reasons for the lack of changes can help sharpen the product. The students are also instructed about the importance of periodically saving files under separate names so that they can return to certain stages and start again( Fig. 4).



**Fig. 4 Poster example:  
“Kanazawa Products Show”**

#### 6-4 Knowledge gained from interviews

The purpose of training in designing information is to extract framework from uncertain information, edit, restructure, and express that information. In general society, the tasks of poster creation and commercial planning are divided. However, it is thought that in the university setting, experiencing both simultaneously is useful in enhancing the power of expression.

#### Literature Reference

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