Summary of the Croatian Audiovisual Centre
Research on film literacy

https://filmskapismenost.hr/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/Izvjestaj_HAVC_Istrazivanje-o-filmskoj-pismenosti_24_07_076_v1.pdf

Purpose and Methodology

The Croatian Audiovisual Centre initiated national research on film literacy. The primary goal was to survey students and educational staff about film art with the ultimate aim of integrating film literacy education into the educational system at all levels. This initiative seeks to develop audience engagement, support Croatian cinematography, enhance film literacy with a focus on Croatian audiovisual works, and strengthen promotional systems. The research specifically aimed to gather opinions and attitudes from students, teachers, professors, principals, and educators about film literacy in Croatia to inform the development and supplementation of the curriculum with film art. The intention is to help students develop essential competencies, function effectively in the media world, and cultivate critical thinking, which is viewed as a crucial skill today.

The research was conducted in two distinct phases.

- **Phase 1** involved qualitative research with educational professionals (teachers, professors, principals, and educators) through personal in-depth interviews.... These interviews took place from September 6 to October 4, 2024 and involved 15 participants from various educational settings (kindergarten, elementary, and secondary schools) across different regions and settlement sizes....
- **Phase 2** consisted of quantitative research with elementary and secondary school students (aged 7 to 17) using face-to-face personal interviews in their homes, employing Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI). This phase was carried out from October 30 to November 27, 2024. The sample included 800 students and was designed to be a representative cross-section of the national population based on region, settlement size, age, and gender....

Key Findings
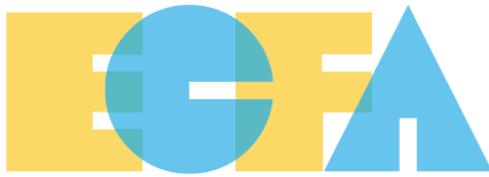### From Qualitative Research (Educational Professionals):

- Educational professionals recognize the **significant and daily exposure of children to media and film content**, noting that while children consume and even create such content, they often lack the knowledge to approach and interpret it critically.
- Children are frequently described as **passive consumers** who accept content without deep understanding, critical thought, or active reflection....
- Early and excessive exposure to screens is linked to **negative developmental consequences** in young children, such as difficulties with speech development, reduced vocabulary, insufficient socialization, and inappropriate behaviors....
- Educators perceive a decline in students' **attention span and concentration**, vocabulary, and communication skills (especially oral expression) in recent years, attributed partly to less reading and discussion, and more time spent on short, fast-paced video content....
- Systematic development of film literacy is considered **necessary** due to children's immersion in media and rapid technological changes....
- Many **parents reportedly do not discuss viewed content with their children**, leaving them to their own interpretations.

**European Children's
Film Association**
Association Européenne du Cinéma
pour l'Enfance et la Jeunesse

- There is a consensus that film literacy should be included in education, with the **basic school level (elementary school) suggested as the most suitable starting point** for mandatory instruction for all children. Some also suggest starting in kindergarten.
- Currently, film literacy is **minimally addressed** in the curriculum (mainly in Croatian language classes), often depending on the individual teacher's interest and knowledge due to overloaded schedules and lack of specific guidelines....
- Teachers who actively integrate film literacy report **positive experiences**, noting increased student interest, improved critical thinking, and enhanced communication skills....
- Practical work, such as creating films, is seen as highly beneficial for developing skills like self-awareness, teamwork, responsibility, and technical abilities....
- Developing film literacy is viewed as crucial for fostering responsible citizens who can critically assess information, navigate the digital age, and contribute to cultural and social development....
- Obstacles to implementing comprehensive film literacy education include **overloaded curricula and limited class time**, a **shortage of qualified teachers**, a lack of certified training specific to teaching film literacy, insufficient equipment in schools, and funding issues....

From Quantitative Research (Students):

- **Films (98.3%) and series (87%) are the most popular types of content** viewed by students.
- **Short video posts on social media are highly popular (73.5%)**, and are the content most frequently watched by 57.4% of students, particularly among secondary school students.... Documentary programs and news are rarely watched....
- Most students **enjoy watching films**, with 53.6% saying they like them and 23.2% saying they like them very much.
- Students spend an average of about **4.5 hours per week watching films**.
- The most liked reasons for watching films are that they are interesting (41.9%) and entertaining (24.7%).
- **Comedy (53.6%) and action films (50.3%)** are the most watched film genres overall. Animated and children's films are very popular among elementary students, while secondary students watch more action and horror films.
- Students most often watch films on **television (77.2%)**, followed by paid streaming services (55.2%) and YouTube (39.5%). Television remains dominant for elementary students, while paid streaming is the primary channel for secondary students.
- The majority of students **watch films with family (80.7%) and friends (61.9%)**. 82% report commenting on viewed films with others, most often friends (secondary students) and parents (elementary students).
- **41.9% of students report watching films regardless of whether they are age-appropriate**, a practice much more common among secondary students (69.4%) than elementary students (28.3%).
- Most students watch films in **English (86.2%) and Croatian (82.5%)**. Reasons cited for not watching films in Croatian include finding them "not interesting" (33.5%) or "boring" (26.2%), or perceiving them as "poor quality" (12%).

**European Children's
Film Association**

Association Européenne du Cinéma
pour l'Enfance et la Jeunesse

- Croatian films receive an average rating of "good" (3.28), with elementary students rating them higher than secondary students. **"Vlak u snijegu" is the most watched and most liked Croatian film** among both elementary and secondary students....
- Students primarily choose films based on **agreement with family (60.1%)** or recommendations from friends (49.5%). Secondary students rely more on friends, trailers, and online reviews than elementary students.
- Only a small percentage of students (13.7%) create and publish short videos or films online.
- Films are most frequently watched in school during **Croatian language classes**. Films watched in school are generally rated positively ("very good" average 3.76).
- Analysis of films in school is largely perceived as **interesting** (51.6% mostly interesting, 14.4% very interesting). The most common topics analyzed are the film's message and theme.
- Over 60% of students feel that analyzing films in school helps them **better understand films they watch independently**. A similar percentage feel it helps them understand everyday life situations.
- Students show limited spontaneous recall of film expressive means (like shot, editing, etc.), although recognition is higher when prompted.
- A large majority of students (73.2%) report that their school does not have a film club or similar activity.
- About two-thirds of students (65.1%) are **interested in having a school subject about film art**, with most preferring it to be an elective subject (82.3%)

Conclusion
Both parts of the research indicate **significant shortcomings in the film education provided to elementary and secondary school students** and underscore the necessity of ensuring that understanding and navigating film and video content is not left to chance. While students are active consumers of film and media content and show interest in the subject, current formal education on film literacy is limited, and many lack the skills for critical interpretation and analysis, particularly regarding formal film elements.