

University as a Medium of Promoting Media Literacy among Schoolchildren

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Abstract In the present article, the relevant alterations in schoolchildren's media educational training is discussed. A couple of questionnaires (initial and final) were conducted to recognize the objective assessment of the media school functioning, according to the methodology developed by Fedorov, 2004. The results from the initial and final assessments demonstrate the working effectiveness of the media school. It is suggested that media education is a compulsory element in the conceptual core of the University discourse.

Keywords University, Media Education, Media Competence, Media Literacy, Media School

1. Introduction

Information and communication technologies as the fundamental element of modern society have led to fundamental alterations in society and individuals' lifestyle. Media dependence has become an essential element at all levels of relations: business, family, friendship, personal. Consequently, problems of self-identification, individual and society relationship, human values understanding, media significance for person and society, awareness of the involvement and preservation of specific cultural traditions are becoming increasingly popular. Young people experience more challenges in the world of "content chaos". The younger generation cannot sort out the uncontrolled flow of media poly information deprived of fundamental basis.

Therefore, investigations carried out by the leading expert in Russian media education A.V. Fedorov [Fedorov, 2004, Fedorov, 2009], revealed that young generation is not familiar with the way of working with plausible and controversial information in complex structure texts and given outside section of the main text, to assess the

information critically, and also to work with the concepts that contradict their expectations.

Accordingly, it is essential to consider media education development and media competence formation among the younger generation in the cultural environment. The audience, receiving a higher level of media literacy, possesses a higher level of understanding and evaluation of the media world and the capability to control it, to accomplish their creative potential in this world. It is necessary to be knowledgeable of the media world to be literate. Media literacy allows people to utilize the advantages of the information space to understand the language of media culture.

In this respect, the requirement for a qualitative leap of constructing a conceptual core of "knowledge – image – media competence – professional competence" of University discourse is evident and critical. "Established more than six centuries ago, the University has become undefined and, although, remained faithful to itself, remaining at all, even astonishingly sharp changes in history, the leading and main institute of "freedom-equal-in-knowledge" [Gambarato, 2018; Nisawa, 2018].

The new educational paradigm of the University should be pointed to involvement in media space and critical thought.

One of the most significant factors in the concept of implementation of Russian education modernization is the graduates' high professional competence, in other words, the complex of professionally significant for the individual and society qualities would allow full self-realization in specific sorts of work. The development of professional competence is organically related to media literacy. Confirmation of the necessary information, obtained principally from the Internet, in the professional field within the framework of space globalization and flow acceleration of information depends on the level of an individual's media literacy.

Development is the primary purpose of the University's media educational strategies, which allows finding, understanding, and implementing a student in the media space. The modern generation will be prepared by the media competence development of the young generation for life in these information conditions. The analytical skills are developed for the interpretation and evaluation of the content to recognize cultural values, their practical significance is taught to select information, and the responsibility in creative self-expression through the media is encouraged. Through media education, youth will be able for critical evaluation of journalists' materials and information environment, identifying myth from reality, understanding the nature of manipulation, and also comprehending their global perspectives, form attitudes, and positions.

Problems of media education are the purpose of research of many Russian and foreign scientists. Considering the 60s of the XX century "media education" as a specific area of scientific knowledge was developed in pedagogics of the leading countries with the purpose to assisting students in adapting to the world of media culture, learning the language of mass communication, and being able to analyze media texts. Consequently, in the 1990s, media education became a mandatory educational component in all schools in Canada and Australia. Generally, these investigations were of general theoretical nature, proposing and analyzing concepts, models, methods of media education and mass media (R. Kubey, L. Masterman, K. Tyner, E. Hart, etc.).

Russia actively involved in the media education process in the early 2000s. Scientific works of A. P. Korochensky, E. A. Bondarenko, S. N. Penzin, G. A. Polichko, Y. N. Usov, A. V. Fedorov, N. F. Khilko, A.V. Sharikov, and other researchers remarkably contributed to the process.

Formal media education in schools and universities implies the following parameters: institutionalization, systematic process, duration and continuity, and also student-teacher relations.

Researchers and experts are increasingly challenging the effectiveness of media education practices in formal education at present.

Hence, conventional strategies of classroom education appear to be inefficient in media pedagogy of M. Prensky. Prensky discusses that there is a circumstance in modern media education when digital language speakers (Generation Z, iGen, digital natives, born-digital, digital generation) are taught by digital immigrants who have adapted to new realities. "I've coined the term digital native to refer to today's students. They are native speakers of technology, fluent in the digital language of computers, video games, and the Internet. I refer to those of us who were not born into the digital world as digital immigrants. We have adopted many aspects of the technology, but just like those who learn another language later in life, we retain an "accent" because we still have one foot in the past.

We will read a manual, for example, to understand a program before we think to let the program teach itself. Our accent from the predigital world often makes it difficult for us to effectively communicate with our students "[Prensky, 2006]. Furthermore, in today's media culture it's no longer enough to know the way of browsing the web, searching, and evaluating the information; it is evenly essential to be a contributor and know the way of sharing one's cultural knowledge across a diversity of contexts and materials [Yasmin et al. 2018; Bakhyt, 2018].

The development of media today is defined by the continuous development of information technology — inflexible programs of formal media education straggle the real agenda. Teaching materials fail relevance within several years.

Simultaneously, the media offer ample opportunities for self-study based on individual requirements. R. R. Gambarato remarks that besides the institutional learning experience, modern media system requires more informal learning techniques [Gambarato, 2018; Maharani, & Subanji, 2018].

For that reason, the circumstance of permanent transformation of the media environment realizes the concept of media education as a non-institutionalized, spontaneous, natural, non-mediated sort of development of media literacy of the audience [Tyazhlov, 2015; Millanei, & Bagheri, 2016]. The critical assignment in this paradigm is the investigation of non-institutionalized practices of media literacy development [Buckingham, 2003], and media potential and roles in this process медиа [Hobbs, 1998; Dorr, 2001; Jenkins, 2006].

The necessity for constant updating of formal media education programs includes a systematic investigation of young people (needs, media literacy, etc.), the formulation of close relations between school and University.

From the perspective of the recipients of the media education process, media education in higher education today can be separated into the following main directions:

- *Professional* – media education of future professionals in the sphere of press, radio, television, cinema, video and Internet (journalists, editors, film directors, producers, actors, operators), media education of prospective teachers in higher education institutions, in the process of professional development of University and school teachers in courses on media culture;
- *Mass* – media education in the context of schoolchildren and students' general education in secondary schools specializes secondary educational institutions, universities, which can be integrated with traditional or autonomous disciplines (special, elective, etc.).

However, there is no widespread consolidation of scientific research in Russia in the sphere of media education. The results of research papers on media education are instead of a general theoretical nature. Less

consideration is given to the practical side of media literacy development. Scientists concentrate more on theoretical and methodological problems of schoolchildren and students' media competence. They overlook the significance of the satisfactory level of media literacy of all members of society, who can evaluate and enrich the cultural traditions of their country. More attention is paid to professional media education. For the so-called "mass" audience, the competence becomes an additional link in the conceptual core "knowledge – image – media competence – professional competence" of the university discourse.

The absence of widespread mass media education in modern Russia unquestionably affect the level of information processes development negatively. Uneducated audience undermines the efforts in enhancing the quality of media functioning and institutions of professional training.

2. Material and Methods

A couple of questionnaires (initial and final) were conducted to recognize the objective evaluation of the media school functioning. The School Performance Assessment Questionnaire possesses 35 items that measure five variables (information, validity, responsiveness, safety, and tangible issues).

The present investigation is carried out based on the methodology developed by A. V. Fedorov [Fedorov, 2004], which is following the educational media blocks of questions and assignments to determine the level of the following criteria of media competence of the audience:

- *Contact* (frequency of contacts with various types of media);
- *Motivational* (genre, thematic, psychological, therapeutic, emotional, epistemological, moral, intellectual, creative and aesthetic motives of the audience contact with media texts);
- *Informational* (knowledge of terminology, history, and theory of media culture);
- *Interpretative* (based on the levels of the perceptual criterion of media literacy).

3. Results and Discussion

The experience of "media school" organization (since October 2006) at the Faculty of Journalism of Belgorod National Research University can be regarded as valuable. Stationary media education can be considered as an effort to organize mass media education in the district. All new entrants are invited to attend the school to get in-depth knowledge of information and media nature.

The senior school students of Belgorod and the region are the audience of the media school, and the faculty is principally interested in the implementation of the career guidance assignments. They are future students' education

and the development of primary professional skills. However, the implementation and promotion of mass media education are proposed to be a super-task.

Theoretical and practical-creative blocks are executed in the process of media school functioning. Media school functioning is according to the approved work plan, designed to instruct students throughout one academic year. These educational components are considered in more details as follows.

1. Theoretical component

The main content of this block implements the following tasks:

- To consider the evolutionary stages of national journalism (lecture from the history of national journalism);
- To acquaint students with the terminological apparatus and the central concepts of the theory of journalism;
- To elucidate the idea of the principal features of the journalistic work and its differences from other information products (lecture introduction to the specialty);
- To provide a detailed idea of the genre varieties of author's journalistic creativity (lecture information genres of print media);
- To respect the ethical component of journalists' professional activity (lecture fundamentals of journalist's professional ethics, code of ethics of journalists of the Belgorod region);
- To familiarize students with the circumstances affecting the capacity of the media to reflect socio-political reality (lecture main typological differences between democratic and authoritarian political systems in the context of journalism).

The theoretical component of the training is following lectures, which are provided by leading teachers of the Faculty of Journalism of Belgorod National Research University.

2. The practical-creative component is directed to the following assignments:

- – To develop skills of competent selection and differentiation of the acquired information;
- – To develop functional skills in planning media products.

Throughout the first years of the media school, the struggle was made for developing inter-school newspaper "Junkor". However, as the practical result confirmed, the publication could not have regular nature, and the information products formed by the listeners lost their significance. Since 2009, the publications of students of the media school could be placed on the official website of the Faculty of Journalism, as well as in the youth supplement "Reporter" to the town newspaper "Our Belgorod". The editorial office of "Reporter" consists of students of the

Faculty of Journalism, who are actively included in the practice of the regional media school. The principal responsibility of cooperation is to inspire students to create media products with their subsequent analysis, elimination of errors and weaknesses, and also offering the necessary professional recommendations.

In the context of working with students, it was concluded that the main challenges that students often encounter in the process of creating media products are, firstly, the problem of finding a subject for publication; secondly, disregard of the fundamental laws of information media texts building (mandatory presence of lead and title, the application of the principle of inverted pyramid); thirdly, the difficulties with the appropriate design of the text for the editor (technical requirements, attribution).

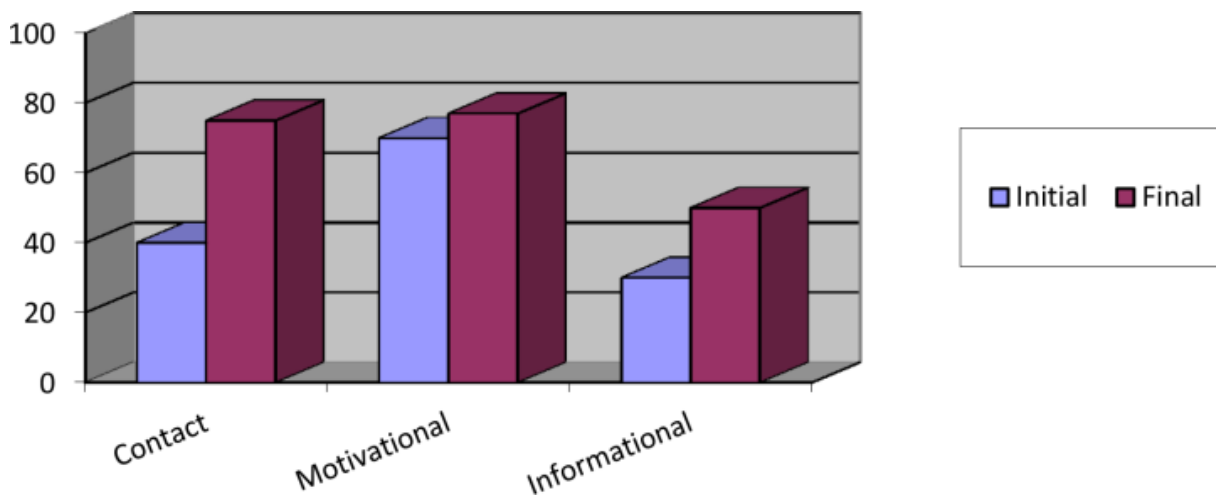
The purpose of the practical-creative component is the correction and subsequent elimination of media educational "gap" in the knowledge of the students of media school. Creative gatherings with journalists from various media, appointments with editorial offices (print media, television, radio) are expected, which allows students of the media school to extensively analyze the peculiarities of the media functioning in general, and to realize the "pros" and "cons" of the journalist's work in particular.

According to the initial and final questionnaires, the results were received as presented in histogram 1. The respondents' answers (in %) are distributed based on the contact, motivational, and informational criteria.

The presented conclusions (histogram 1) determine the dynamics of the overall level of media culture of senior school students according to three principal criteria:

contact, motivational, and informational. The boundaries of the development levels of media competence are defined as follows: 0-30% (low level); 31-69% (medium level); 70-100% (high level). The analysis of the initial survey data confirmed that television and the Internet are the most contact media for senior school students. As indicated, radio and print media are not of real popularity for the students of the media school. The revealed preferences are considerably accountable by the peculiarities of these electronic media: the speed and availability of information, and also the presence of visual support of media text.

The desire to obtain new information and artistic impressions are the central motives of contact with the media. Recipients also remarked the motives such as searching for materials for educational, scientific, research purposes, and the desire to learn the way of creating media texts by investigating specific cases of professionals as dominant. Rather high results obtained throughout the initial survey may indicate the target audience, the level of its motivation and interest in obtaining fundamental professional skills in the realm of media. However, the level of development of informational criterion is extremely lower compared to the previous ones, which is most probably as a result of the absence of the theoretical basis of the target group. According to the results obtained in two sociological surveys, there is a positive dynamic of the development of all analyzed levels of media literacy. The authors believe that special consideration should be given to the remarkable "growth" of the informational criterion, which was the purpose of the theoretical component of training.



Histogram 1. Schoolchildren's level of media competence based on the initial and final survey

As a justification of the classification of levels of interpretative/evaluative criterion of media competence of the individual, the authors relied on the features of the following capabilities of the audience to perceive media texts:

- 1) The multi-dimensional knowledge of the figurative reconstruction of the case in the plastic composition of individual episodes, their clutches in the artistic structure;
- 2) The representation of the logic of the author's thought in the space-time dimensions;
- 3) Reading the hidden imagery, the reception of the artistic solution of the case, the multilayered internal content;
- 4) Perception of the development of artistic thought in the complex combination of the sound plastic organization of space: graphic, tonal organization, temporal organization of the work as a result of the repetition of visual images, plans, their temporal activities, emotional and semantic correlation of individual fragments, and visual themes. In this instance, the criteria of a high interpretative level of media competence are described.

The listeners' level of estimation of the skills development (interpretative criterion) was conducted by analyzing creative assignments. Students composed an essay about their preferred movie or a TV program. It is concluded that the development of skills to analyze and address media texts is at a lower-middle level. Some problems appeared in the analysis, including abstracting, highlighting the primary meaning and also the main elements of the media text (film, TV program). Fundamentally, the assessment is degraded to the list of the main characters of the film and the guests of the program. It is challenging for listeners to discover the principal director's idea and its illustrative embodiment, and also the objective settings of the program.

4. Conclusions

It is believed that acquired experience on successful practical media education will make further scientific and practical development possible, with no limitations of career guidance programs, audience's age, and purposes. From the authors' point of view, it will advance the media school to a new level – mass media education.

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