

## DEVELOPMENT OF FUTURE FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHERS' INFORMATION AND MEDIA SKILLS



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**Abstract:** The article presents the authors' experience of participation in IREX project "Learn to Discern: info-media literacy". It reveals the theoretical grounds and nowadays demand for future foreign languages teachers' information and media skills development as well as the practical issues of educational process. There is the description of authors' certified course "Integration of info-media literacy into professional activity" for students of the Faculty of Philology who study foreign languages. Besides of aim and structure of the course described there are the examples of effective activities to be used in foreign language classroom. The modes of interaction preferred in the classroom are pointed, too.

**Keywords:** information and media skills, information literacy, media literacy, future foreign languages teachers, education.

Media literacy is not just important, it's absolutely critical. It's going to make the difference between whether kids are a tool of the mass media or whether the mass media is a tool for kids to use.

Linda Ellerbee, producer/host, Nick News

In today's conditions, knowledge and information technology are the basis of social development and create new opportunities in the formation of the media educational space. Information and media education is a powerful and informative tool for influencing the further development of mankind and the country. For a modern person who is constantly under information pressure, it is obviously important to develop skills of conscious attitude to the media space, understand the nature of information and the role of media in its dissemination, distinguish facts from judgments, critically analyze information [3]. All this can provide

media education, designed to perform a unique function - the preparation of personality for life in the information society. Thus, the formation of a person with well-developed critical thinking should be one of the priorities of modern education, in particular through the integration of information and media (info-media) education with traditional disciplines, such as a foreign language

We consider info-media education a process of personal development through the prism of mass media in order to form a culture of interaction with it, development of creative, communicative abilities, critical thinking, skills of perception, interpretation, analysis and evaluation of media texts, learning various forms of self-expression through media technology. The skills and abilities formed in this way contribute to the analysis of information, the culture of its consumption, powerful communication, which is the basis of info-media literacy as a key point of media education of students in learning a foreign language.

Being info-media literate as for students means being able to find what they are looking for, to choose exactly what they need, and determine how reliable this information is. And along with mastering effective search strategies, students must be able to store, reuse, and disseminate information. One more important ability is to make optimal use of relevant information, storing it rationally, and to share it with others correctly" [1].

Media education and info-media literacy are especially important in the context of preparing students to interact with the information space. During the first decade of the 21st century, UNESCO pursued a path to combine the concepts of media literacy and information literacy as media and information literacy. Media and information literacy covers information, media, and technological competencies. It should be noted that in UNESCO publication "Media and Information Literacy in Journalism" key principles or laws are formulated:

Law 1. Information, communication, libraries, media, technology, the Internet should be used critically by society.

Law 2. Every citizen is the creator of information / knowledge. Everyone has the right to access to information / knowledge and the right to self-expression.

Law 3. Information, knowledge and communications are not always neutral, independent or impartial.

Law 4. Every citizen wants to receive and understand new information, knowledge and messages and be able to communicate with others, even if he does not express this desire.

Law 5. Media and information literacy is not acquired overnight. It is a constant and dynamic experience and process. It ... includes knowledge, skills and attitudes regarding the use, creation and transmission of information about media and technological content [2].

The level of the correct perception of information depends on the level of students' information and communication skills, aesthetic ideas about its presentation are formed, norms of ethics and morality are mastered. That is why we have had an urgent need to develop a certified course "Integration of info-media literacy into professional activity" for students of the Faculty of Philology who study foreign languages professionally. The program was developed as part of the Learn to Discern: Info-Media Literacy project, implemented by the Council for International Research and Exchanges (IREX) with the support of the US and British Embassies, in partnership with the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine and the Ukrainian Press Academy. The curriculum aims at developing the competencies of critical perception of information through the integration of information literacy in the learning process. The purpose of the program is to form in future teachers certain knowledge and skills based on the media education, media culture, media literacy; formation of critical thinking skills and the ability to find, prepare, transfer and receive the necessary information using various digital tools, motivate to further improvement of professional competence during foreign language classes.

The course covers three modules: "Media Education and Media Literacy"; "Media education as a means of developing critical thinking" "Information and visual literacy and digital security" and provides a method of conducting classes based on various productive forms of learning (discussions on the principle of "buzz-group", pyramid, training, group work, case study, motivational-interactive activities, creative tasks of research character, technology of quest-classes, web-quests, etc.), developing individual style the student's learning, critical thinking, stimulating their abilities to create new content, of perception, interpretation and analysis of authentic media texts and assimilation of knowledge of media culture.

For the teacher, this course, in our opinion, is a constant search for new forms, methods and techniques of working with student youth. The training modules address issues related to media types and their role in shaping the information space, journalism standards, the concept of completeness of information and manipulation, youth's media-education as a basic tool, media technology, critical thinking in the field of visual media products, information in professional activities (work of a teacher of languages), ethics of information use, digital literacy as an integral component of professional competence, etc. For the deeper understanding of these phenomena, there are also introductory online courses on media literacy on the Prometheus platform (courses: "Information Wars", "Critical Thinking for Educators", "Educational Critical Thinking Tools", "Media Literacy for Educators", "Media Literacy: Practical skills", etc. can be found on the link <https://prometheus.org.ua/>); EdEra (courses: "Very Verified", "Factchecking: trust-check", etc. can be found on the link <https://www.ed-era.com/>), IREX ("Media literacy for citizens" can be found on the link <https://www.irex.org/>).

Within the development of information skills, an important component is the individual creative process. Parameters of creativity, unusualness, direct approach to solving the tasks related to the higher order thinking skills and development of critical thinking. Based on this, we note that the theory should always be supported with specific practical activities aimed at developing relevant skills.

For example, "E-cards", "Slogan"; introduction of game technologies "Open questions from media", "Life in the world of attractive lies"; creative activities "Media and you and me", observation activities "Find and combine", "Direct time"; creative activity "Create a message", brainstorming "Fact and judgment", game "De-coding information through video and images", game-energizer "Create a web of information"; business game "Experienced teachers vs. beginners in the development of information and media literacy of students".

Practical classes include activities that allow to develop critical thinking, find, transmit, reproduce and receive the necessary information using various digital tools. It is very important the activities are creative and develop the competence of info-media literacy. For example, when studying the lexical topic "Vacation", "Travel" (Urlaub, Reise), we have

compiled information and cognitive activities that cover the elements of media literacy. Here is the description of one of such activities used in German language class:

### Activity "Association"

Aim: to develop critical thinking skills, to expand the worldview, to promote the creative abilities of students.

Assignment: What the words "Vacation", "Travel" are associated with? What do you think makes them close?

1. Wann reist man in Urlaub?
2. Wohin reist man oft?
3. Warum reisen Leute gern?
4. Was soll man vor einer Auslandsreise machen?
5. Wie kann man eine Reise organisieren?
6. Wo kann man Unterkunft finden?
7. Welche Aktivitäten gehören zum Urlaub?
8. Was kann auf Reise passieren?

Work progress: After the answers, students are split into groups and answer the questions received on the cards; justify and express their opinion, give reasons for their position.

The activity "Journalist Less than Five Minutes" helps to form the skills and abilities of media literacy, as well as to use censorship, analyze advertising material, the ability to present information of a foreign information nature, develop critical thinking, and track the digital footprint.

Assignment. Analyze two videos containing information about the new hotel according to the following scheme:

- to indicate the type of advertising material;
- to pay attention to its duration in time and its filling with information;
- to collect additional information for video materials (What, where, when);
- to analyze the source of information;
- to make a commentary on video clips (truthfulness);
- not to use personal positions and emotions while analyzing video materials.

As we can see, the skills formed in this way contribute not only to the analysis of information, but also to the culture of its use within the world of powerful communication, which is the basis of media literacy as a key

point in info-media education of students when studying a foreign language.

In our opinion, it is important for the development of creative abilities, intellectual development, and active life position not only to understand functions of information and its sources, as well as critically comprehend its content, make balanced decisions. And this applies not only to users, but also to producers of media content and information. An essential condition is the introduction of media components in the educational process.

The issues of media education, media literacy, and modern information technologies are gaining special importance today, because young people, including students, are quickly getting under the pressure of information coming from both social networks and the media. Thus, information and media literacy provides students with developed media literacy, critical thinking, social tolerance, fact-checking, information literacy, digital safety, visual literacy, creativity. Besides, the use of media education in the process of learning a foreign language contributes to the effective solution of basic problems, in-depth study of the content of academic disciplines, optimization of self-education and self-development.

Youth's info-media education is becoming increasingly important. It promotes the development of critical thinking, creativity, information competence, teamwork, the ability to find problems and solve them or even turn into new opportunities, the development of communication skills, public speaking and defense and self-study, self-organization, professional and personal self-development.

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