

## **Media Literacy of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century in Modern Education**

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**Abstract.** *The article focuses on media literacy as a crucial competency for the 21st century. It portrays media literacy as a pivotal stage in the progression from information literacy to media culture. The research outlines various domains of media education and provides examples of specific skills cultivated throughout the learning process. Additionally, the author highlights actionable strategies that can be implemented in university-level media literacy instruction.*

**Key words:** *media literacy, media education, media culture, information literacy, critical thinking, higher education.*

### **Introduction.**

Effective work is being carried out to ensure freedom of speech in our society and to increase the role of the media space and the media in the process of political and economic development. At the same time, it is more important than ever to analyze the current situation in the field and promptly respond to the challenges arising in the media space.

In the modern world, when technologies are developing and replacing each other daily, the speed of information dissemination can sometimes be equal to the speed of light. We are surrounded by constant information from Internet, television and radio broadcasting, video blogs, social networks. The current generation of children is significantly different and electronic gadgets is their natural habitat. This order of things sets several goals for teachers at once: to master modern technologies, introduce them into the educational process and instill media literacy and media culture in students.

Media literacy has long been an integral part of the educational program, [1, p. 101]. Many researchers talk about the need to introduce media literacy in schools as a separate subject or study within the framework of an existing program (for example, as part of a computer science course, when studying foreign languages, etc.). The need to teach media literacy to future teachers has also been proven [2, pp. 138-188]. However, it is worth to note that in the contemporary world, media literacy should also be one of the components of training specialists in higher education institutions. In order to prove the need for studying media literacy by university students, it is necessary, first of all, to understand what media literacy is, how it differs from information literacy and what skills a student can develop in the process of studying media literacy.

### **Materials.**

It should be noted that media literacy as a separate subject can be studied within the framework of professional training of such specialists as journalists, radio, television and communications workers, editors, PR managers, diplomats and lawyers. But in this article, we will consider media literacy in the aspect of general training of first- and second-year students of technical programs, for whom media literacy is not a subject in the specialty and can be taught as part of a foreign language course.

In the field of media education, the following definition has been derived: media literacy is a set of motives, knowledge, skills and opportunities that facilitate critical analysis and evaluation of media texts with the subsequent opportunity to experiment and create your own [1, p. 101].

Media literacy, as a skill of the 21st century, has emerged in the process of evolution, which develops from classical literacy (basic reading and writing skills) to digital or information literacy and, as a result, to media literacy or media competence [1, p. 101].

Let's take a closer look at the differences between information literacy and media literacy. Information literacy as a concept emerged when there was a need to learn new skills for working with computers and other digital devices. Information literacy includes the ability to understand the language of the media, independently determine sources and methods of searching for information, and communicate competently in the information environment [3].

### **Research and methods.**

Media literacy, in turn, combines all stages of development of the information society. Media literacy is impossible without basic writing and reading skills, as well as without the basic ability to use electronic resources. Media literacy is the result of media education, the purpose of which is the formation of media culture [3].

According to E. Bondarenko, who is a specialist in the field of media education, the following areas of media education can currently be identified: information security, information search, perception and interpretation of media texts, media creativity and practical development of the media space.

All these spheres can be arranged in the form of a pyramid similar to Bloom's taxonomy, going from basic skills to advanced ones. Thus, at the first stage, we have an elementary ability to use media resources, navigate the media space, fight media viruses and manifestations of Internet addiction, then we learn to make search queries, select and filter information. The next stage of media competence development implies the ability to master the context and perceive the hidden meaning (recognize the hidden tasks of an information message and determine what target audience it is aimed at, form your own opinion about the information received, and not accept the thought imposed by the author of the message as your own). After that, you can move from analysis to synthesis, at this stage the student can already create their own media texts and become a direct participant in the media communication process. The highest stage of the pyramid implies the ability to observe the ethics of communication in the media space, while critically perceiving information and recognizing the means of manipulation. Thus, we move from simple information literacy to media competence and media culture.

### **Results.**

Today, in developed countries, the goal of any education is not to provide knowledge on specific subjects, but to develop the ability of learning (learning to learn) and adaptation to new conditions [4, p. 8]. According to L. Petrik, media literacy is closely related to the formation of critical and creative skills and abilities. First of all, this is the development of critical thinking, the ability to solve problems, analyze and evaluate information. Media education, in turn, is responsible for the development of such global skills as intercultural communication, awareness of oneself as an active member of society, freedom of speech and the right to information [1, p. 101]. Thus, the main task of media literacy is to teach students to compare, analyze, discard the unimportant and concentrate on the necessary, convincingly argue their point of view and understand that there may be other opinions regarding the same problem [3].

Having described media literacy and listed the skills that are developed in the learning process, we can move on to the second task set in this article. As we have already mentioned, our goal is not to describe media literacy as a separate subject, but to show the possibility of introducing media literacy into the educational process through the study of a foreign language.

## Discussion.

The National Association for Media Literacy Education [5] offers four steps to developing media literacy, which overlap to some extent with the areas of media education mentioned earlier.

The first step is definition. First of all, the teacher must make sure that students know what modern media includes. It is important to remember that media is not only television and radio, but also all printed publications, including the papers and magazines, flyers and billboards, social networks, news sites, video games, and phone apps.

The next step is to determine the students' personal preferences, find out what websites and social networks they use, which resources they consider "good" and which ones are "bad". In this way, the teacher can understand what level of media literacy the students already have, whether they can distinguish between reliable and unreliable sources of information, recognize fake news and propaganda.

The third step is responsible for analysis. Before creating their own information, messages and becoming an active participant in the media space, students must learn to analyze existing media. For this, you can use the "escape" principle: ESCAPE (evidence, source, context, audience, purpose, execution) [6].

And the last step, which relates to the highest level of cognitive development, is the creation of your own media product (news, website, application, e-tool, blog and vlogs, etc.).

## Conclusion.

Thus, media literacy is one of the important components of training skilled experts who will meet the requirements of the modern world. It is not only responsible for the development of such important skills as critical thinking and intercultural communication, but also helps young people successfully cope with the overflow of information. Thanks to media literacy, students will be able to assess the reliability and bias of information sources and, as a result, could influence the existing media space, becoming competent media users. Considering all this, we can say that the integration of media literacy into the educational process of higher education institutions is an essential condition of the 21st century. Further research into media literacy will allow for a more detailed examination of how media texts and resources are used within the educational process.

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