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# University Students' Readiness for Teaching Media Competence

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#### **Abstract**

The article presents some actual experience of introducing media education in modern higher education. The authors present a review of current Russian and foreign publications that consider media education as an important factor in the professional training of present-day university graduates.

The article also outlines the main directions for integrating media education in extracurricular activities of contemporary university students, including a wide range of creative and educational activities. All of them are aimed at expanding university students' knowledge about the world of media culture, actualizing their interest in media creation and media education projects. Curricular and extracurricular forms of media education are focused on solving the major task of promoting media competence among young people, which is one of the key vectors for successful exploration of the today's information field, the ability to think analytically, master the argument, strengthen the evidence base of one's own reasoning, include creative amateur media production.

**Keywords:** media, media education, media competence, university, types and forms of media education, university students.

#### 1. Introduction

Mass communication occupies a special place in modern education. The means of mass communication and their integral part – media culture, are a necessary component of the information society culture. "Informatization has led to an increase in the volume of students' knowledge of global and local systems, networks and databases, the emergence of fundamentally new technologies, to a new culture, to a new type of society" (Zharkov, 2021: 198). Numerous media (television, press and the Internet, etc.) offer the younger generation a preferred set of behaviors and activities, define standards in various areas of life.

In this regard, the importance of media education is significantly increasing nowadays. The competences related to the ability to critically comprehend and analyze texts of mass communication, to define true and false media information, to choose and use positive educational and developing media content in training have become vital for the younger generation in our present-day mediatized society where the amount of varied media information is daily growing.

It is quite obvious that university students – future psychologists, school teachers, organizers of work with youth and other professionals who will be engaged in professional activities with the younger generation should be ready to use media education in their future teaching.

At the same time, A. Knyazheva proposes to understand the readiness for media educational activities as "a type of professional readiness that includes several interrelated components: the cognitive component (students' knowledge of modern media, creating media texts and their impact on the audience; knowledge of media technologies that are used in the educational process

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at school; knowledge of contemporary digital and media resources), the practical component (skills related to the perception, analysis and interpretation of media texts, adapting their content for the educational process at school, creating their own media texts; the ability to comprehensively use media technologies and media resources in teaching) and the reflective-evaluative component (the ability of students to evaluate the effectiveness of their own media education activities, outline their readiness for teaching media competence, to reflect on their teaching and educational impacts in the process of implementing media education activities)" (Knyazheva, 2021: 51). As one can see, these indicators are quite consistent and consonant with the criteria of media competence of the individual identified earlier and characterized by A. Fedorov (Fedorov, 2007: 23-24).

The readiness for future media education activities of university students can be achieved in the process of studying theoretical and practice-oriented academic subjects included in the curriculum in many universities of our country, and also carried out in the course of including the student community in various forms of extracurricular work: involving youth in media creation competitions, media club activities, in the work of student media centres, media schools, training media education workshops, etc.

## 2. Materials and methods

The material for this study is the analysis of the current state of media education of university students in the system of higher education.

Research methods: search, generalization, analysis and synthesis of scientific information on the issues of media education in universities; content analysis, generalization and classification, abstraction and concretization.

The materials used in the study are presented from the point of view of the unity of the theoretical foundations and practical approaches to the inclusion of media education in the process of professional training of the student community, the prospects and relevance of media education potential in the contemporary system of higher education.

## 3. Discussion

The issues of preparing university students of humanitarian faculties for professional activities based on media education are an essential aspect of scientific research made by Russian and foreign scholars. Among them are the works written by A. Fedorov, A. Levitskaya, I. Chelysheva, G. Mikhaleva and others.

The development of critical thinking and media competence of university students is presented in the researches by A. Fedorov (Fedorov, 2007; 2015). Teaching young people how to resist media manipulation is presented in the articles by A. Levitskaya and A. Fedorov (Levitskaya, Fedorov, 2022), the images of school and university as reflected in media culture are analysed by A. Fedorov, A. Levitskaya, O. Gorbatkova, I. Chelysheva, G. Mikhaleva (Fedorov et al., 2017; Fedorov et al., 2017a; Fedorov et al., 2017b; Fedorov et al., 2017c; Fedorov et al., 2018; Fedorov et al., 2018a; Fedorov et al., 2018b; Fedorov et al., 2018c; Fedorov et al., 2018d; Fedorov et al., 2018e; 2020). Some studies by I. Chelysheva and G. Mikhaleva are devoted to the challenges of organizing media education of university youth (Chelysheva, 2021, Chelysheva, 2022; Chelysheva, 2022a; Chelysheva, Mikhaleva, 2021; Chelysheva, Mikhaleva, 2021; Chelysheva, Mikhaleva, 2022a).

Some scholars study the possibilities of involving visual technologies in teaching university students to develop their motivation and improve the quality of the educational process: "With the help of visual images, graphics and diagrams, complex material is absorbed more efficiently, students work productively with complex schemes and algorithms. By transforming the information that needs to be processed into visual diagrams, students easily memorize it and use it to solve their tasks" (Byundyugova et al., 2022: 28).

Media projects created by university students are also widely discussed and promoted by Russian media educators, for example, in museum pedagogy that uses interactive and multimedia technologies that help integrate a modern format, virtual content to the museum and actively involve people to interact with the museum as an educational space, to culturally enlighten and enrich them: "Creation of a multimedia booklet as a whole contributes to the formation of a universal cultural, informational, and educational space, the development of intercultural dialogue, presenting to the whole world the value of one city as part of the cultural heritage of the entire country" (Dolgireva et al., 2022: 57).

Our foreign colleagues also underline the importance of young people's active social inclusion in the life of the local community: "Life story in this research is a really useful skill in the design of programs to training the use of technology and media literacy, which is based on psychoeducational settings that encourage young people to use it in a positive way, and among other aspects, there is the personal contribution of those who will want to develop their interactive projects, yet as an opportunity to make the world a better place" (Camarero, Varona, 2016).

A similar experience is described by S. Goodman who writes about youth media, critical literacy, civic activism and educational reform (Goodman, 2018). Media education nowadays is often used as a tool to promote critical thinking among students (Wright et al., 2015).

Many foreign researchers highlight the significance of introducing media education in modern higher education, especially when it comes to training will-be teachers (Kourti, Androussou, 2013). Media competence is more and more often dealt with as part of basic and professional competencies (Lebid, Shevchenko, 2020). "In this meaning a media-competent student or employee has better chances for getting a prosperous job, career promotion or professional growth than a media-illiterate person" (Fedorov, Mikhaleva, 2020: 153).

In this aspect communication and information technologies can also be analysed in preparing university students for research work (Tselykh, 2019). "The fact that digital competence is a key competence in the 21<sup>st</sup> century which increases the educational level of an individual (in the lifelong learning process) and the chances for their professional growth and personal satisfaction within the context of diverse life realities of the 'networked' society, is currently undebated among experts" (Kačinová, 2019). Moreover, some researchers suggest that those interested in media literacy in higher education will need to clearly define and develop standards and competencies to measure media literacy student-learning outcomes (Christ, 2004; Hobbs, Frost, 2003; Mihailidis, 2008).

Some researchers put a special emphasis on the effect of the personal and pedagogical-didactical competence of teachers in the field of media literacy on their teaching effectiveness (Gálik, 2020; Gálik, Oprala, 2021; Kačinová, 2019; Saptono, 2022; Vrabec, Bôtošová, 2020).

As evidenced by the analysis of scientific papers on the issues under study, various aspects of media education for university students of humanitarian faculties are widely presented in publications of Russian and foreign researchers. The papers analyze the issues of organizing the educational process which includes some elements of media education, as well as extracurricular activities of media education.

### 4. Results

The analysis of contemporary researches and studies on the topic of integrating media education in modern universities, media education activities of university students of humanitarian faculties has shown the broadest prospects in the following approaches:

- studying media education in the curricula of the professional education, as well as integrating media education elements into some university academic subjects;
  - media education and media creation in extracurricular activities of university students. Let us consider these approaches in more detail.

At the present stage, more and more humanitarian academic subjects at the bachelor's and master's degree levels include media competence. Nowadays the most productive way in Russian conditions, in our opinion, is the integration of media education into professional curricula and educational programs. Integrated media education in the process of studying academic subjects helps increase the level of university students' cognitive interest in the topics studied, promotes the development of analytical thinking, comparative analysis of events and facts presented in educational literature and collections of audiovisual or printed media texts, allows them to use the method of analyzing pedagogical situations on specific examples of media culture, etc.

For more efficient use of media education potential in integrated classes, we consider it necessary to carry out serious methodological training of modern university students who need to be well aware of innovative methods and technologies of media education, possess an arsenal of various forms and methods of integrating media education in teaching. And there are many such elements in media education: these are creative tasks based on media texts of various types and genres, and independent search work on audiovisual material, making filmographic lists on certain educational topics, and much more.

The main functions of media education in teaching were identified by E. Vovk as follows:

1. Informatization of teaching (access to various sources of information).

- 2. Activation of educational and cognitive activity of youth.
- 3. Increasing students' motivation for learning.
- 4. Interactive learning.
- 5. Monitoring the educational process.
- 6. Improving the efficiency of mastering educational material.
- 7. Motivation for creative activity, preparation of presentations (Vovk, 2021).

In the process of including media education in the syllabus the first is understood primarily as a pedagogical technology. The promise of this approach is emphasized by V. Khegai: "Media education can be successfully applied in university teaching as a pedagogical technology that allows one to diversify the forms of presenting educational material, to use a computer to organize exercises and activities: educational (representation of material), training (development of skills and abilities), and text (control knowledge)" (Khegai, 2021).

In addition, media education is increasingly involved in extracurricular educational and developmental activities of contemporary university students. This includes university media centres, student television network, media clubs, media projects of great social importance and numerous Internet sites that allow university students to create their own media texts, and participate in video, social advertising and essay competitions on the topics of media culture. At the same time, "taking into account the fact that young people spend a lot of time in universities, receiving not only new and useful information through the media, but also encountering a large number of low-quality media texts, it is advisable to introduce the media education component within the framework of extracurricular activities, thus contributing to the developing of leisure, increasing social, communicative activity, and educating high moral qualities" (Chelysheva, Berezkina, 2022: 4).

Here it is also difficult to overestimate media creation of various types and genres, including oral and written forms of working with media texts, analysis, reproduction and creation of one's own media texts, contributing to the solution of educational tasks, fostering creativity of the younger generation which, by the way, is one of the most important indicators of life in the context of digitalization accompanied by multitasking and the need to approach a variety of professional challenges. In this sense, media education is one of the essential factors predetermining the necessary conditions for promoting creativity, including the use of innovative methods and technologies for conducting media education lessons based on the main conditions for enhancing creativity identified by D. Potapov: "For successful development of a person's creativity, it is necessary to adhere to the principles of developing (problematic, dialogic, individualization, heuristic and search methods of teaching), individual creative approach (building a creative environment, engaging in creative activity, co-creative interaction), as well as activating and stimulating motivational, intellectual, volitional and emotional personality structures" (Potapov, 2021: 94).

The process of forming the creative abilities of modern university students in the process of media education is closely related to the tasks of developing the artistic perception of media culture. In media education, "gamification, creative interactive forms of working with media texts are widely used. This includes improvisation games, performing oral and written tasks, including the opportunity to reflect on events, characters, the emotional background of what is happening on the screen; development of media projects, etc." (Chelysheva, 2022: 351). Many of these activities are successfully implemented in the student media club.

As the practice of organizing extracurricular media education shows, an important educational platform for promoting university students' media competence and the formation of their readiness for media education activities is the organization of open media schools. As an example, we can mention the online All-Russian Open Media School with international participation "Media Education and Media Literacy for All" which has existed since 2017 and is intended for university students, undergraduates, graduate students, young scientists and researchers in media education. "The purpose of the media school classes is to popularize the best practices of film education and media pedagogy, exchange practical experience and consolidate teachers and researchers in media education. This event is aimed at promoting mass media education and is not aimed at training professionals in the media sphere. The target audience of this event are young teachers, psychologists, culturologists, sociologists, organizers of work with young people who are interested in introducing media education into their professional activities. Accordingly, among the participants of the media school are researchers and media practitioners

from different regions of Russia, as well as our foreign colleagues from France, Egypt, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and Belarus. The open media school includes three main modules consisting of classes (autumn, winter, and spring sessions); leading Russian and foreign researchers, festival organizers, heads of media clubs and media laboratories, leaders of all-Russian and regional media projects for schoolchildren are invited as speakers and students" (Chelysheva, Mikhaleva, 2022: 150).

## 5. Conclusion

Thus, readiness for media education in the future profession is becoming increasingly important for contemporary university students. In this regard, at the present stage, media education is being widely included in all types of educational, research and socio-cultural activities for present-day university students.

The expansion of media education in training university graduates is becoming a vital and urgent goal of present-day higher education, and is an essential component of mastering the professional competencies of the student community. In this respect, we consider it necessary to more actively include academic subjects related to media education as well as critical thinking development and media competence in the curricula of humanitarian areas of training in universities, schools, media creation organizations.

A wider use of media education in extracurricular activities of university students is also of no small importance for enhancing their creative potential, the ability to apply media education methods and technologies in leisure work with the younger generation.

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