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Technology of Project Activity in Media Education (On the Example of Training Aspiring Journalists at Kazan Federal University)

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Abstract

The article presents the results of research on the experience and technologies of creating author's educational and creative projects in the framework of several practice-oriented disciplines in the implementation of the curriculum for training journalists at Kazan (Volga Region) Federal University. Using the methods of analyzing the progress of producing media projects from the idea to their implementation on the platforms of social communication, pedagogical diagnostics, professional self-reflection and teachers who manage media projects, analyzing the stages of project implementation, as well as evaluating the risks and opportunities of implementing student media projects in open access, the main principles of organizing project training for journalism students were identified. The pedagogical experience of teachers is systematized. The authors of the article focused on the conceptual ideas of the developers of the theory and practice of the project method by E.W. Collings, J. Dewey, W.H. Kilpatrick. Project work during training lays simulates the process as close to practice as possible and forms the necessary skills, abilities and competencies corresponding to modern trends. During the implementation of the project, each student goes through all the stages of the production cycle of the release of a media product, working in the deadline mode and responsibility for its compliance.

Keywords: project method, project activity, media platform, journalism, media design methodology.

1. Introduction

The purpose of the article is to identify and study the specifics of project activity technology in media education and, based on it, attempt to improve the level of project activity in the educational process using the example of training aspiring journalists at the High School of Journalism and Media Communications of Kazan (Volga Region) Federal University (hereinafter KFU).

The scientific problem and its relevance are predetermined by the long-term transformation of the Russian education system at all levels. One of the directions of the new approach to the preparation of bachelors and masters is the introduction of project activities in training, which is often widespread and imposed on the teaching staff by the university administration. Sometimes this happens very urgently, requiring a rapid and serious transformation of the curriculum, in the disciplines of which the hours of practical and/or independent work of students are increased, and even new courses based on project-based activities are introduced. These innovations do not always imply their methodological support and training of teachers, who have to experiment, acting on the current situation, their own intuition and based on the level of training of students. Instead of waiting for future all refresher courses, teachers need to ensure a high-quality learning

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process on a daily basis. Therefore, learning new things often happens together with students during classroom sessions. Thus, in our opinion, the vertical model of knowledge transfer (from teacher to students) is transformed into a horizontal one, in which all sides of the educational process have the opportunity to teach each other.

This is what happened at the High School of Journalism and Media Communications of KFU, where in 2020, at the initiative of the management, a new discipline “Applied Media Design” was introduced into the curricula of bachelor’s degree programs in the areas of “Journalism” and “Television” (full-time and part-time forms of study) media project. Its labor intensity includes 22 credits (792 hours out of 486 hours of practical training, 135 hours are allocated for independent work of the student, 171 hours are provided for monitoring the development of educational material). The course is developed in each semester of study (two sessions per week). It is conducted in the format of creative workshops with a mandatory reporting form for winter and summer sessions, and does not replace, but complements, students’ academic and industrial practice. Successful accomplishment of this subject involves the creation by the team of each student group of at least one educational media project, which in four years of preparation should make itself known in the Kazan media market, compete with well-known media outlets in the region and to a certain extent earn the trust of the target audience. There are still about ten practical tasks associated with achieving the goal. Each student should try out different professional roles during the course of their studies: correspondent, editor, bild-editor, coordinator, web designer, SMM-specialist, media producer, and possibly special project editor. The management of our department also expressed the idea that each student should prepare and defend a final qualification paper at the end of the fourth year, in which they would present and critically reflect on their own creative activities in this media project in the context of its release and further development in the media market of the city and region.

According to V.Z. Garifullin, R.L. Zayni and R.M. Galieva, “Media design is one of the ways to enhance students’ creativity” (Garifullin et al., 2023: 115).

Currently, most teachers read lectures on this discipline. The practice is as follows: taking a group in the first semester, the master works with it until graduation, from semester to semester complicating creative tasks and monitoring their implementation, possibly inviting practicing journalists to review student publications. There is a goal: to prepare a competitive graduate who can immediately start working successfully in the editorial office of mass media of any level. However, the reality is that there is no single methodological basis and basis for teaching the discipline “Applied Media Design”. Each teacher is guided by their own ideas about what is necessary, important or not worthy of students’ attention. In addition, this can affect the quality of training of specialists.

Project work in the framework of university practice-oriented disciplines, organized in parallel with industrial practice, has become an integral part of the training methodology for in-demand media specialists, because the educational process organized in this way prepares students as closely as possible for successful professional activity. The main method of teaching in practical and laboratory classes is the project method “a learning system in which students acquires knowledge and skills in the process of planning and performing gradually more complex practical tasks-projects” (Osmolovskaya, 2012). It always involves “solving a problem that involves, on the one hand, using a variety of teaching methods and tools, and, on the other, integrating knowledge and skills from various fields of science, technology, technology, and creative fields. The results of completed projects should be, as they say, “tangible”, that is, if this is a theoretical problem, then its concrete solution, if practical, a concrete result ready for implementation” (Mazeina, 2014).

Project activities and project training at the university are grounded on the knowledge and skills of a moderator teacher-a competent practitioner who has pedagogical technologies and skills in organizing and implementing projects at the university. Project-based training in media education is implemented by:

- as a technology for creating a creative project: from idea to implementation and forming an audience loyal to the editorial staff around it;
- as an evaluation tool for assessing the professional skills and abilities of journalism students;
- as a finished product, sold on various educational platforms (e.g., social networks and instant messengers, designers suits *Tilda*, *Shorthand*, *Google maps*, *Zen*, educational media

projects of students of the High School of Journalism and Media Communications KFU *Dragon News*, *Kazanskaya stujurka*, etc.);

– as a ready-made media project in various formats (print edition, video, and infographics, timeline, interactive presentation, slide show with voice-over text, panoramic photo);

– as an organization of individual and collective work of students (author's innovative projects with the distribution of areas of responsibility, positions, responsibilities, functions).

The theoretical basis of the research is the works on the theory and practice of the project approach in teaching as a whole (Alekseeva, 2021; Avtaeva, 2020; Chelysheva, Mikhaleva, 2023; Kornetov, 2020; Ligai, 2016; Muryukina, Gorbatkova, 2022; Sherstneva, 2019; Zatsepina, 2013 and others) and foreign researchers (Friesem, 2019; Jha, Gangwar, 2020; Lai, 2023), reflecting the historical approach to project activities and substantiating the personal factor of student development in the process of project-based learning. Currently, in the domestic and foreign literature in the theory of question, researchers are actively working on theoretical and practical aspects of the implementation of project-based learning in the educational process, exploring historical trends in the emergence of the project method as an activity-based approach to learning. At the same time, justifying the relevance and necessity of its application in the educational process, as a conceptual technological component in the bundle “education – training – upbringing”. Modern project activity is justified by scientists as innovative, that is, based on the use of modern technologies.

The principles, methodology and technology of project-based learning in the educational process, so the organizational approach, are reflected in the scientific article by S.I. Simakova, which describes different types of project activities on the example of a number of disciplines and areas of work, using her own experience (Simakova, 2011); Yu.Y. Leonova, who presented the method in one of her studies projects as a form of organization of the educational process at the university, different from the traditional lecture and seminar system, as well as an innovative model, educational technology of the educational process, involving the solution of a specific problem, contributing to the development of the student's personality, intellectual qualities and creative abilities (Leonova, 2022).

The specifics of modern media projects and the aspects taken into account in their implementation (promotion and project management) are studied (Bezruchko, 2023; Chesnova, 2020; Fadeeva, 2022).

The results of our research can be useful for researchers to prepare research papers on the technology of journalism, develop a media design methodology of media project and a practical algorithm for implementing an educational project on open media platforms, as well as further it can improve the general principles of organizing project activities in media education. The practical significance of the research results lies in the fact that the principles of organizing project activities can be implemented in the educational process during practical classes in specialized universities, training seminars for media specialists, business games and academic trainings.

2. Materials and methods

As an empirical basis for the study, we used:

a) curricula of the Institute of Social and Philosophical Sciences and Mass Communications of KFU in the direction of 42.03.02 “Journalism” of the profile “Multimedia journalism” (bachelor's program) and 42.04.02 “Journalism” of the profile “New Media” (master's program);

b) work programs of disciplines within which educational project activities are carried out at the Higher School of Journalism and Media Communications of KFU (“Applied media design”, “Journalism in the mass communication system”, “Data journalism”, “Creating a website on online journalism”, “Production practice”);

c) educational creative and scientific-educational projects created by students of the KFU High School of Journalism and Media Communications (*On the facts* (https://vk.com/pofa_ktam), *JourLine* (<https://vk.com/zhurline>), *Radio 4U* (https://vk.com/radio_4u), *New Media Master's Degree Program* (<https://vk.com/public212500886>)).

When performing the study, we used the following methods:

- analysis of the progress of media project production from the formulation of ideas to their implementation on social communication platforms – basic research methods and joint practical activities of teachers and students;

- the method of pedagogical diagnostics (studying and analyzing the experience of project-based training in Russia and abroad) and professional self-reflection of teachers, authors of this article, who manage media projects at the Higher School of Journalism and Media Communications of KFU;
- analysis of project implementation stages to identify successful and unsuccessful tactics and strategies for their implementation by student groups;
- assessment of risks and opportunities for implementing student media projects in the public domain.

The combination of these methods, on the one hand, provides a comprehensive analysis of educational project activities within the framework of practice-oriented disciplines, on the other hand, it helps to build effective work on providing project – based training and creating a project in a group of learners.

3. Discussion

The project method is not a new method in education. The origins of the project method can be traced back to the V century BC and are associated with the art of “maivetika”, created by Socrates. With the help of leading questions, Socrates helped his students to “give birth to truth” on their own (Sherstneva, 2019). This approach is an example of the origin of this method in training.

The origin of the term “project” is associated with the activities of Italian technicians and architects in the XVI century. A little later, experts noticed the inner abilities and inclinations of the child. They offered to train and educate children based on these makings. At the same time, the learning process should take place at the self-level, when the student learns about the world by performing tasks, and this implements the process of self-education and self-development in practice (Ligai, 2016).

It is believed that the project method appeared in the second half of the XIX century in the United States. The educational and pedagogical approach is based on the ideas of the American educator and philosopher J. Dewey, who promoted the slogan “Learning through activity” (Pelageichenko, 2012: 11). J. Dewey put forward the idea of instrumental pedagogy. According to this concept, learning is reduced to work and play activities, where the child’s action is a tool for learning through personal discovery and is a way to comprehend the truth. The result of this training was to develop thinking skills. Thinking skills were understood as the ability to self-study (Kumskov, 2011: 9; Ligai, 2016; Tomina, 2011: 263; Zaitsev, 2019: 9-11).

J. Dewey’s disciple and follower, American educator and psychologist W.H. Kilpatrick continued to develop the project method. He analyzed the feasibility and conditions of using this method in the educational process, gave its description, detailed theoretical justification, and implemented it in the learning process. The author noted, “the project method provides students with freedom in choosing a problem and solving it, which contributes to the formation of an active position of students” (Kornetov, 2020: 22). He paid special attention to the disclosure of the essence of the project method, which later found wide application in pedagogy and education in many countries of the world (Kornetov, 2020: 19-21).

W.H. Kilpatrick, who rejected the traditional school, proposed to build the educational process as “an organization of the child’s activity in the social environment, focused on enriching his individual experience” (Pomelov, 2021: 155).

The method of W. Kilpatrick’s projects provided for such a system of training, when “students gain knowledge and master skills in the process of performing a system of constantly complicated and pre-planned practical tasks” (The Best..., 2022). This teacher identified four phases of the project: design, process, implementation, and evaluation. By the method of projects, the outstanding teacher meant “a well-executed plan” (Kornetov, 2020: 20-22; Pomelov, 2021: 150-151).

Another founder of the project method, professor E. Collings, conducted a pedagogical experiment in a rural school in Missouri in 1917. According to the method of E. Collings, students had to design what they had to do themselves. Learning material – the everyday experience of students who chose the content of their academic work themselves. The teacher only helped them carry out their planned activities. The result of the experiment conducted at the end of the school year was that students mastered a sufficient number of skills and knowledge necessary to “enter their life”. They are literate, have an idea of what surrounds them, are able to work and show initiative (Dzhurinsky, 2000: 330-331).

In Russia, the project method was widely used in the Labor School of the 1920s. P. Blonsky should be considered the founder of the Russian school of the project method of P. Blonsky. The theoretical ideas expressed by P. Blonsky were put into practice by another Russian scientist-teacher S. Shatsky. He assumed that schools should prepare students for life, not just teach them to read and write (Mazeina, 2014).

In the pedagogical literature, the term “project method” first appeared in 1908–1910 in the reports of the Massachusetts school administration. *The American Bureau of Education* officially approved it in 1911. However, many scientists were critical of the term “project method”, considering it not entirely successful, and there was a long discussion about this in the United States (Pelageichenko, 2012: 8-10).

In our opinion, the optimal definition of the term “project” is given by O.N. Vasina and O.N. Ponomareva: “a unique activity that has a beginning and end in time, aimed at achieving a certain result/goal, creating a certain unique product or service, with specified resource and time constraints, as well as requirements for the implementation of the project” quality and acceptable level of risk” (Vasina, Ponomareva, 2012: 711).

In current scientific literature (Drozdov, 2019; Golubev et al., 2016; Ivanova, 2019; Kodanina, 2021; Korytnikova, 2013; Sharoiko, Chvyakin, 2015; Shatunova, 2021; Shesterkina, Marfitsyna, 2019; Vasilenko et al., 2016; Yudina, 2022; Zhuravleva, 2017) you can find various definitions of the term “media project”. In the modern sense, a media project can be considered “a professional collective blog on the Internet with cultural and social topics that provides the audience with unique content of author's programs, reports and videos, or a platform for conducting a dialogue with the audience on the most pressing problems of modern society” (Chesnova, 2020: 50; Plotnikov, Shamina, 2022: 136), as well as “a temporary structure intended for creating media products, performing works and rendering services in the media sphere, as well as for creating new and reorganizing existing media organizations” (Belousova, 2018: 19; Belousova, 2019: 26). V.A. Plotnikov and O.A. Shamina emphasize that “any media project, including the creation of new media organizations, can be implemented in the media sphere” it does not have all three attributes of a project (goal, time frame, and resources), but it has an indirect relation to projects and is used in the sense of, for example, “a type of business” that does not provide for a finite period of existence, but only a goal and resources” (Plotnikov, Shamina, 2022: 137).

In Russian media studies, a separate block of scientific articles is devoted to the process of implementing specific student media projects, identifying their advantages and disadvantages (Cherednichenko, Lapko, 2021; Chutcheva, Lavrishcheva, 2019; Gavrillov, 2022; Evdokimova, Kislaya, 2021; Kodanina, 2021; Myasnikova, 2017; Nazarova, Shesterkina, 2021; Nemchinova, 2017; Peniaz, 2019; Podobina, 2017; Podoprighora, 2017; Rachipa et al., 2019). Most of these works are descriptive in nature, but they contain reflection and often methodological recommendations to the authors.

As noted by V.Z. Gafullin, R.L. Zayni, R.M. Galieva, despite the fact that student media projects “do not have proper registration with Roskomnadzor, they have a lot in common with traditional media: the frequency of updating publications, mass audience, transparency of messages, relevance and lack of direct contact with the communicator in the communication process. “...” The media project is part of the educational process at the university: this is a joint research project of students and teachers. This process can be considered as a pedagogical technology: the teacher-mentor organizes the student's educational activities with the help of a media project, and the student collects a portfolio, accumulates experience and knowledge, forms skills and uses them in practice” (Garifullin et al., 2023: 115).

As you know, “students’ project activities can be fully formed only within the framework of the educational process, since in professional activity in production, a specialist should already be able to carry out this activity, evaluate its results, communicate with colleagues and management and reflect” (Merenkov, 2019: 136). We agree with this researcher, who believes that “integrating a social project into the educational environment of a university, into the educational process contributes not only to the formation of professional competence and the development of creative potential among students, but also to the formation of an active, socially responsible specialist who is able to work effectively for the benefit of his country – the education of citizenship” (Merenkov, 2019: 157-158).

In modern pedagogy, project activity becomes particularly important, because in educational activities it “stimulates students’ interest due to a non-standard approach to studying the material and motivates children not only to receive new information, but also to develop creative abilities by creating a project” (Ligai, 2016).

The task of modern educators is to make the form proposed in the XIX century by the American educator W.H. Kilpatrick relevant to our time.

Many scientists consider Project-based Learning as a promising approach that enhances the level of student learning in higher education. Scientists at Leiden University (the Netherlands) conducted empirical research on project-based learning (Guo et al., 2020). In order to avoid a gap between what students study at university and what they need in the workplace, the authors of the concept propose to provide students with the opportunity to participate in real problem solving and knowledge building in a professional context. One of the attractive ways to achieve this goal is Project-based Learning. The results of their study showed that Project-based Learning had a more positive impact on students’ academic performance than direct education.

J. Sayegh and A. Rigopoulos (Sayegh, Rigopoulos, 2023) write about the effectiveness of Project-based Learning and the improvement of academic performance. In project-based training within the framework of the course “Introduction to Modern Media”, the authors applied a structured group approach. They structured the groups based on the advertising industry model. Students were assigned specific titles and interrelated responsibilities (project manager, researcher, copywriter and public relations manager). Using their method, the authors noticed an increase in academic performance. The structured group approach, according to experts, is effective and can be adapted to other courses that require students to work together.

Researchers J. Dobson and T. Dobson (Dobson, Dobson, 2021) presented an interesting approach to project-based learning as to the freedom of expression of oneself and one’s opinion among schoolchildren. Their approach demonstrates that schools need to create a freer space for students to collaborate and develop their sense of freedom. Based on the collaborative action research model, the assessment uses a combination of student-as-teacher and project-based learning approaches. This approach to learning challenges the consultative approach in teaching and teaching didactic values, empowers students, increases their activity and makes it easier for them to navigate life.

According to researcher R. Henney (Henney, 2018), any pedagogy of media practice is at the junction of teaching professional skills and critical thinking. The use of projects, the scientist believes, is the main means of structuring educational experience as a means of reflecting professional practice. This researcher believes that vocational training should take into account the social context and experience of applying projects as a real activity. This author conducts his reflections on the use of project-based learning in the curriculum of media practice based on discoveries, not on construction.

A number of scientists draw attention to modern technologies in media education, which contribute to the potential change in educational formats and interaction with students in the context of universal digitalization. We are talking about digital tools and the role of digital technologies in media education practice. For example, an extensive article by scientists from India is devoted to understanding the role of digital technologies in education, which emphasizes the importance of digital technologies as a powerful tool for achieving quality education (Haleem et al., 2022). For example, T. Coughlan, R. Pitt, R. Farrow (Coughlan et al., 2019) is studying innovative opportunities for the disclosure of educational resources in medicine.

J.V. Pavlik (Pavlik, 2023) discusses the importance of generative artificial intelligence for journalism and media education in the article. He believes that generative artificial intelligence opens up an era of potential transformation of journalism and media content. In particular, the possibilities of using *ChatGPT* in media education are described. At the same time, the researcher draws attention to the fact that his article was also written in collaboration with *ChatGPT*.

T.J. Marion and S. Fixson (Marion, Fixson, 2021) think about the process of transforming the innovation process, as well as how digital tools are changing work, collaboration and organization in the development of new products. The results of digitization of existing design and collaboration tools, as well as the introduction of completely new digital tools, affect not only the quality of products and the speed of their creation, but also the innovative work itself, change the content of work, collaboration models, decision-making powers, organizational structures, management structures, firm boundaries and, as a result, entire ecosystems.

Scientists also talk about the importance of teamwork during digital transformation (Gálik, Oprala, 2021; Guinan et al., 2019). The digital transformation that characterizes the time in which we live includes the ability of an organization to adapt, react and position itself to achieve success in an environment of rapid technological development. The most important element in achieving successful digital transformation is the digital project team. The authors identified four main command levers that enable digital transformation: (1) diverse and focused team composition, (2) iterative goal setting, (3) continuous learning, and (4) talent management.

Finally, scientists from the University of Texas (Doolani et al., 2020a) write about the use of augmented reality (XR) systems in training, education, safety and production. Having studied the possibilities of virtual, augmented and mixed reality technologies, the authors talk about the effectiveness of XR technology used in various fields of vocational training. They can be used in on-the-job training, especially because in professions where safety is important, real-world training is often too difficult, expensive or risky (Doolani et al., 2020b).

Thus, in this article, we consider project activities for university students in a bundle of concepts: project-project method – project management. At one stage, we concretize the concept of “project”, adapt it to the “media project” direction, and then work with this concept.

4. Results

Taking into account the definition given by V.Z. Garifullin, R.L. Zayni and R.M. Galieva to the term “student media project” (“the process of creating a media product, often carried out collectively using modern technologies” (Garifullin et al., 2023: 118), in this article, we understand the term “project” as a joint way of organizing an individual project students’ individual and group activities, united by a common goal of activity, focused on the joint performance of tasks that contribute to the creation and implementation of the project, as well as performing a set of interrelated actions to achieve the result – the final product. This is a joint activity of students and the moderator-teacher responsible for the content, form and idea of the project. The project is subject to requirements for the presence of constituent elements, content, form of submission, formulation of a question (problem), proposal of solutions (implementation) and the possibility of implementation to obtain a result that meets the project goal.

Project characteristics:

- availability of the goal and focus on its achievement;
- project preparation regulations (rules for working in a group, requirements for materials and information);
- time limit (deadline for preparing materials and submitting the project);
- involvement of all team members in project development;
- novelty of the idea and innovativeness of the project;
- whether the project is realistic or feasible (financial, technical, or resource-based).

In training media specialists, we use the concept of “media project”, which is based on the methods of media design and media modeling. Media project – a specific format of information and communication between the author and the audience (printed, online, video, photo, audio, multimedia, infographics, etc.).

In our case, this is an educational media project that is created from scratch and implemented on a specific Internet platform. We understand an educational media project as a creative product created independently by students: from the idea, goal setting, development of a thematic concept, forms of presentation of materials, project format, aimed at a specific audience, taking into account the peculiarities of its media behavior and media consumption, with the possibility of interacting with the audience and receiving feedback in the form of various interactions.

Project management is an area of activity in which certain goals are defined and achieved, as well as the use of resources (such as time, money, labor, materials, energy, space, etc.) is optimized within the framework of a certain project (which determines the final result and limits on time and/or other resources).

Project activities help motivate students to self-study, develop a creative approach to creating media products, creative thinking, search for information, master software products, plan and organize the activity process, research skills and teamwork skills. Therefore, in our view, project activity in the training of media specialists is a kind of quest, as a result of which students have the opportunity to realize all their intellectual and creative potential and create a real and original creative product that can be placed on various open digital platforms, acquire their own permanent

audience, responses, reactions, and interaction. At the request of its authors, an educational project can eventually transform into a professional media product, gain the status of a mass media outlet, become a place for students to complete training, production and creative practices, be an object of research in final qualification papers, participate in competitions, festivals, conferences, and become an author's material for a portfolio. But in order for this to happen, the creative team will have to work long and hard. During the three years of conducting the discipline “Applied Media Design” at KFU, out of more than two dozen media projects implemented so far, not one of them has managed to reach at least a semi – professional level, because this is not only completely new type of activity and relationships in the team, but also the acquisition of new responsibilities. Work in this direction is underway.

The activity-based approach to training media specialists is grounded on creating conditions in the educational process that are as close as possible to the working conditions in real journalistic practice. It is provided by the curriculum of the bachelor's degree program in Journalism at KFU. It is included in all stages of preparation, starting from the first year of the discipline “Applied Media Design”, where the authors of this article, teachers who actively conduct this course, apply the project method. The organization of the work of project activities in the bachelor's degree is designed to imitate the organization of the work of the media editorial office as close to reality as possible, as well as to orient students to regular joint (in small groups – the so-called editorial teams) creative and research activities. Each full-time and part-time student must complete all stages of work from the idea to placing the project on other chosen open media platform. In our opinion, this creative process can be divided into the following four parts: organization, technology, implementation, and project management. They can be specified by following features.

Organizational activities include:

- audience identification (understanding what needs to be done and for whom, who may need it: who will be the target audience of the future media project);
- definition of the media platform (placement of the project);
- formulation of the project name, goals, objectives and expected results;
- development of a media project concept (idea);
- formulation of the thematic area (what will be included in the project) and project ideas (what the project is about);
- project content (directions, sections, thematic blocks, tags);
- media text formats (text, infographics, video, flashcards, longread, interactive, multimedia);
- design, visualization (design);
- division into subgroups (editorial departments), distribution of responsibilities and areas of responsibility.

Technology for creating and maintaining a media project (preparation and release):

- choosing the topic of the future media text;
- collecting data/facts;
- filtering (selection of actual data);
- fact-checking;
- content preparation (creation of media texts in different formats and genres);
- editing and proofreading;
- visualization (multi-media text addition);
- placement of finished materials in the project;
- combining finished materials into a single project (video, infographic, presentation, project on the Tilda digital platform, and many others);
- working discussion in the mode of editorial planning sessions and flying lessons (study of the current agenda, planning, distribution of topics, analysis of the quality of project tasks);
- implementation of a media project.

Analytical activities are as follows:

- analysis of its journalistic thematic direction in other media;
- analysis of their own scientific thematic direction in the scientific literature (preparation of scientific papers on the topic under study);
- monitoring of media of various subjects and levels, blogs, social networks, instant messengers to determine the current information agenda, current topics and problems;
- creative self-reflection;

- research of the experience of other media, creative handwriting, style and features of the work of well-known journalists (preparation of journalistic and scientific works on the topic under study);
- self-education in accordance with the chosen learning path (research of scientific literature, trends in the media sphere, changes in journalistic practice, as well as in the media industry as a whole, and an attempt to understand their causes);
- follow trends in related fields of activity (PR, SMM, advertising, storytelling, networking, public speaking).

Management activities that include project management:

- planning and organization of activities (individual, collective);
- development of the business plan of the media project;
- development of a media project content plan;
- calculation of possible risks (external and internal);
- development of a system for encouraging project participants (criteria for assessing competencies and skills);
- development of methods for attracting an audience (subscribers);
- development of methods of interaction with the audience;
- promotion of the media project on the Internet (promotion of the project; as an option – promotion in the search engine (SEO-optimization of the site));
- determination of project performance criteria (results);
- completion (achievement of the project goal, discussion of the implementation of its tasks, the quality of its implementation in general, professional reflection, assessment of the competencies and skills of its participants acquired in the process of its implementation).

Modern methods of project management and management contribute to the promotion and development of a startup on the Internet, attract audience traffic and give the project solidity. In this regard, one of the tasks of media specialists is to create a high quality, interesting and useful audio and video product using all modern digital services. Currently, this task can be solved almost completely. Thanks to the use of the latest IT-technologies and the opportunities they open up, you can visualize content and make it memorable to the audience. Therefore, we recommend that students:

- make the project visually more attractive or “clickable” (use expressive headlines, bright and dynamic photos, rich video materials);
- create your own recognizable style (individual design, accessible infographics, content that the audience understands and the language of media texts).

In the course of the first year of the bachelor's degree, teachers try to lay the foundations of practical activity for each student. Further, project activity becomes more complex and improved with the appearance of special disciplines in various areas of journalism. In the next academic year, as part of the discipline “Introduction to data journalism”, students learn how to create data texts, independent media projects and web content in the field of data journalism in the following available online programs:

- infographics (*Infogr.am* (<http://www.infogr.am/>), *Piktochart* (<http://www.piktochart.com>), *Creately* (<https://creately.com/>), *Visme* (<https://www.visme.co/>), *Easel.ly* (<https://www.easel.ly/>), *Venngage* (<https://ru.venngage.com/>));
- web-content (*Shorthand* (<https://shorthand.com/>));
- presentations (*Visme* (<https://www.visme.co/>), *Prezi* (<https://prezi.com/>));
- timeline (*Tiki-toki* (<http://www.tiki-toki.com/>), *Time.graphics* (<https://time.graphics/ru/>), *Timetoast* (<http://www.timetoast.com>), *Sutori* (<https://www.sutori.com/en/>), *Preceden* (<https://www.preceden.com/>)).

During the final year of the course “Journalism in mass communications”, students work one final large-scale media project, which, in fact, should demonstrate everything that students have learned during their undergraduate studies in four years. These are conceptual, author, collective, practical, and systematic approaches to creating a media product. As a rule, students perform projects in the following formats: author's video; project on digital platforms *Tilda* and *Shorthand*; project in *Google Maps*; animated videoclip; presentation and longread.

As a result of joint watching and discussion of projects, strengths and weaknesses are identified, what needs to be worked on, what is successful/unsuccessful, what ideas can be taken into account and used in future professional activities. Such collective work with presentation,

comparison, joint discussion, reworking, demonstration, and getting audience reactions to the created media project is, first of all, a good practice.

Master's degree program in "Journalism" ("New Media" program) the project methods are also used in a number of disciplines. For example, one of the activities that one of the authors of this article implements during his classes is a popular science project. Its essence is that the teacher invites each master's student to make a broad review of the scientific literature on the topic of their future master's thesis, reflect on the relevance of the topic, study the scientific approaches of other researchers to the scientific problem and definition of concepts, give a description of the methodological apparatus that is supposed to be used: what methods will be used learn what method, what can be identified, highlighted, and defined.

Students should present the results of the study in the form of scientific texts and publish them in the thematic community "Master's Degree in New Media" in the *Vkontakte* social network (<https://vk.com/public212500886>). Theses on the history of the development of the scientific problem raised in the dissertation research and scientific theses reflecting the results of the dissertation research are published by undergraduates in collections of scientific articles, participating in scientific conferences of various levels.

During the course "Research work", and then within the framework of their own research practice, students have the opportunity to collect, comprehend and systematize a significant amount of text material, which they can then use both in the text of the dissertation and in their scientific portfolio.

This project has a distributed set of areas of responsibility. The teacher is its moderator, editor, and supervisor. Among the students in each group, there is an issuing editor (publishes texts in the community), a text editor and an editor of texts of foreign students (there are more of them every year); responsible for the submission of materials and design of project work. The most popular formats for students are presentations, slideshows and longreads made in the text editor of a social network.

Thus, master's students, working on the preparation of their future final qualification work, simultaneously conduct the project: collect and summarize scientific material, share it with other project participants, as well as with all users of the social network – the community is not closed. We consider the participation of each master's student in this project to be the most important part of preparing his future dissertation, because right now he must not only reflect on the collected amount of theoretical information, as well as get acquainted with the scientific ideas and results of scientific research of his colleagues, but also receive feedback from them, support, and possibly suggestions for qualitative expansion theoretical and methodological basis of the initiated research. It seems that an interested and detailed discussion of the quality of the project task and recommendations for its improvement can give confidence to each student, which is necessary from a psychological point of view.

The second author of this article uses a similar approach in teaching the practical discipline "Creating a website in online journalism" also in the first year of the master's degree program "New media" of KFU. After a short series of lectures, a team of students works in mini-groups to prepare their original media projects. As a rule, students can create small multimedia educational projects with a primitive structure about journalists whose fates seemed interesting to students in the 12 hours allotted for practical classes. For example, if a group of foreign undergraduates is studying the discipline, the teacher gives them the task to develop a media project dedicated to the life and work of well-known journalists in China. Thus, students from different countries are acquainted with the publications and style of media representatives: Russians with authors from China and students from China with the work of Russian journalists. The teacher should pay special attention to ensuring that group members have their own creative task, and then the work will go faster. We can't do without extra-curricular activities here. This type of activity becomes, in fact, the main one, and in the classroom each group presents the results of their work for the week, receives feedback and reflection from classmates, and useful advice from the teacher. Each of the six practical sessions has a specific task: pitching ideas (first); presenting the structure of the future site and its thematic blocks (second); discussing the visual component of the site and its multimedia services (third); filling the site with interesting content (fourth and fifth); presenting a demo version of the site (sixth).

Practice shows that students (especially, foreign groups due to the complexity of communication) do not have enough hours provided for in the curriculum. Therefore, in the final

lesson, we discuss only intermediate versions of websites, the teacher gives some advice on how to improve them, fill them with a large number of interactive elements (for the first time, as a rule, there are very few of them), and asks students to finish the task before the exam in the discipline, which is held in a month and a half or two. At the same time, the final defense and discussion of each media project are organized, identifying their positive and negative aspects. Students mostly choose free accounts media platform of the *Tilda* media platform to work with, and if someone has a subscription to it, they use paid services. For example, in the spring of 2023, one of the groups created a website in memory of the recently deceased prominent public figure of the Republic of Tatarstan, a well-known Kazan journalist, media manager and local historian Eduard Khayrullin (<http://eduard.khayrullin.tilda.ws/>).

Teachers of KFU's Higher School of Journalism and Media Communications use the project method in teaching various disciplines provided for in the bachelor's and master's degree curricula. But the most important and most difficult thing, both from the methodological and practical sides, is the full-fledged implementation of the course "Applied Media Design".

Within the framework of teaching this discipline in the KFU bachelor's degree, the learning process is aimed at experimentally finding optimal solutions for the implementation of project work in the educational process and improving students' practical skills in the joint activities of the teacher and student. In fact, teachers model the working conditions of future media specialists in a real media editorial office based solely on their practical experience in the media sphere and their own pedagogical methodology. Teachers have not been trained in the implementation of something in the educational process, so each teacher who goes to this discipline develops his own teaching methodology, project concept and implementation plan, and then offers them to students. This is a kind of experiment, during which the methodology of teaching disciplines with the use of project work is developed, knowledge, skills of project activity are formed, that is, practical work among students for future free entry into the profession of journalism.

Teachers provide a base and teach you to write media texts, systematically fill the project with relevant content (the principle of consistency), understand the meaning of your work (functional approach) and feel responsible for each published word (professional ethics). Thus, even in the junior years, from the first days of training, we implement systematic, functional, professional and ethical approaches in our work. At senior courses, it is necessary to organize training and practice based on the experience of professional journalists of various levels and directly in the media offices. The reality is that currently at KFU, conceptually, meaningfully and organizationally, the entire course for four years of project activity training is organized and taught by one teacher. As part of working on a long-term project, there should be project management (including a manager from the media sphere, at least at the level of specially organized workshops), project promotion (PR, SMM, targeting). The entire educational process should be based on these workshops, which can bring the educational process closer to real media practice.

Often, when working on the creation of modern formats and design of media texts, the authors of this article are faced with the fact that previously actively used programs and Internet services have now become paid and virtually inaccessible for use in the educational process. The university management does not approve numerous applications for subscriptions to the most necessary programs in the learning process. The technical and material capabilities of classrooms, teachers, and students are different: unfortunately, it is not yet possible to provide everyone with equal conditions for working on projects.

And all this, it should be noted, without taking into account the specifics of teaching foreign students who do not know how to think and convey thoughts in a text in a foreign Russian language. To keep up with their Russian colleagues, they write texts in their native language and translate them using an online translator or artificial intelligence. Hence, the problem of the appearance and significant increase in the number of artificial texts that needs to be adapted to the format of projects in content, stylistic and semantic aspects. In this case, the teacher also becomes an editor of the texts of foreign students, since it is not always possible to entrust this work to Russian-speaking students due to their lack of many editorial skills and experience, as well as often the desire to edit the texts of foreign fellow students. Thus, we should talk about completely different specifics of teaching not only project activities, but also the basics of the media profession, and the basics of media literacy.

It turns out that without the necessary Internet programs and the necessary technical base, using the gadgets available to teachers and students, we develop and implement unique

educational media projects that are able to take their place in the niche of student projects created in an online environment, compete, participate in competitions and, most importantly, promote professional self-improvement of students-future specialists in the field of media, the formation of a creative portfolio of each student. During their senior years, they can submit an application for employment in a media editorial office. While they implement their project activities, teachers lay the foundation for the body of professional skills of the creator, forming him as a multi-faceted person who is able to work effectively in multitasking conditions. By creating a variety of educational media projects now, each teacher of the “Journalism” direction at KFU contributes to the development and contributes to the state of journalism of tomorrow and the day after tomorrow to the best of their abilities.

5. Conclusion

Further implementation of the project method in the system of higher education requires both a change in the trajectory of the educational process and the improvement of professional skills of teachers and especially creative disciplines. However, students also need to reconsider their somewhat inert attitude to the learning process, because their workload has significantly increased. Now they need to work hard and creatively both in the audience and independently, creating high-quality media texts for their publication in projects being developed and implemented in the public domain. In the course of project activities, students master the skills and technology of creating a media product that can attract the attention of as large an audience as possible: they study the areas of journalistic activity, programs for creating media products, layout and design, learn to develop the concept, structure, content, design of a media product, place it on open media platforms, and interact with the audience. In the process of joint media design (students – teachers), a unique intellectual and creative product is created, new production and creative skills are formed, and subsequently professional experience is accumulated.

We consider project activities in media education to be a promising research area that requires further study and development of new forms of organizing practical activities in the training of media specialists, commensurate with the requirements of the time.

The author's methodology based on this research currently demonstrates a certain effectiveness of using the project method in the educational process of training aspiring journalists at KFU in terms of introducing students to their future professional activity, obtaining and consolidating professional competencies in it, developing individual and collective work skills, instilling interest and laying the foundations of the future profession, developing a sense of responsibility and responsibility and compliance with the journal's professional ethics, altruism, and professional solidarity. We observe the manifestation of many of these qualities in second- and fourth-year students who create media projects that form the empirical basis of this article. For some, they are more pronounced, for others-less, but in comparison with the initial period of their training, a positive trend is noticeable. However, to become a professional journalist, every student still has a lot of work to do.

We consider this topic relevant and require further development in the following areas of research:

- methodology of project activity in media education (especially for foreign students, who, in our opinion, need a different approach to training than with Russian-speaking students);
- technical support for organizing project activities (multimedia project laboratories, showrooms);
- promotion and development of educational startups on open digital platforms.

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