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The Role of Media Education in Shaping the Conscious Choice of a Future Profession Among Young People in the era of Information Glut

Elena Lomteva ^{a, *}, Alexey Demidov ^{b, c}

^a Russian Academy of National Economy and Public Administration under the President of the Russian Federation, Russian Federation

^b Public movement “Information for All”, Russian Federation

^c Moscow State Institute of Culture, Russian Federation

Abstract

In a rapidly developing information society, and especially in the context of the implementation of the request for participation in the development of digital transformations, young people have to face a huge amount of information, find their place in which it becomes increasingly difficult to determine their future profession. Traditional approaches to career guidance based on testing and collecting information about various professions often prove to be insufficiently effective due to an overabundance and fragmentation of data. Despite the growing number of school graduates choosing to study in the secondary vocational education system (hereinafter referred to as vocational education), almost a third of potential applicants have no idea what they will do after graduating from a professional educational organization, while half would like to change the direction of training already at the training stage. This and other factors necessitate the improvement of existing mechanisms for the professional orientation of children and youth. In this situation, media education comes to the fore as a means to navigate the information field, critically evaluate information sources and distinguish reliable facts from manipulations and fakes.

In the context of modern information saturation, the role of media education in the career guidance of young people is increasing. It performs the following main tasks:

- It forms the competencies necessary for the younger generation to live in an information society: critical thinking, the ability to evaluate information sources, recognize manipulations and fakes, a culture of personal information security and information culture in general.
- Forms and develops an understanding of the specifics of professions related to mass media;
- Promotes an informed choice of profession based on an understanding of its requirements and capabilities, primarily in the field of media communications.

Thus, career guidance integrated with media education becomes a powerful tool that allows young people to make an informed choice of profession in conditions of information saturation and competition.

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Keywords: secondary vocational education, computer competence, mass media, media literacy, media images, media education, non-formal education, professional self-determination, digital literacy.

* Corresponding author

E-mail addresses: lomteva-ev@ranepa.ru (E. Lomteva), demidov@ifap.ru (A. Demidov)

1. Introduction

Currently, the mass media play a significant role in shaping the personality of children and adolescents. In terms of its influence, the media can be compared to a parallel school in which a child receives an informal education, learns social norms and learns to interact with the world (Bondarenko, 2013: 225). This "parallel school" has a huge advantage — it uses almost all channels of human perception: sight, hearing, tactile sensations, emotions, which makes its impact deep and pervasive.

Media education is a field of pedagogy that is at the junction with many other disciplines, for example, psychology, sociology and computer science. The purpose of media education is to understand how media affects a person, his development, worldview and behavior. It is impossible to imagine the modern world without media. Cinema, television, radio, the Internet with all its social networks and information services are not just entertainment, but a powerful tool that shapes our views, values and lifestyle (Fedorov, 2014; Gálik et al., 2024; Gálik, Gáliková Tolnaiová, 2022; Kačínová, 2019; Lomteva, Demidov, 2023; Vrabc, Bôtošová, 2020).

However, the ability to control the content and methods of information dissemination on social networks is quite difficult. The information space is in chaos, sometimes it is difficult to distinguish truth from lies, and advertising, propaganda and manipulation can easily disguise themselves as useful information.

We cannot protect children from TV, radio, and the Internet, but we can and must teach them to use the potential of existing means of communication competently and consciously. This is not just a necessity, but a vital skill that will help them navigate the information flow, protect themselves from manipulation and form their own, balanced and conscious picture of the world.

The modern educational system should take into account the influence of the media and actively integrate it into the educational process and the process of upbringing. Our task is to teach children to use this tool wisely and responsibly. In the modern world, we are literally drowning in the flow of information. This also applies to the field of education, and especially the choice of profession. On the one hand, access to information has become incredibly wide: the Internet is full of articles, videos, forums and blogs dedicated to various professions. On the other hand, this accessibility creates new difficulties. To distinguish reliable information from unreliable, to find really valuable sources, to critically comprehend the received data — all this requires certain skills. This is where media literacy comes to the rescue. A media literate person is able to navigate the information space, filter unnecessary data, search for reliable sources of information, use different information formats (text, audio, video) and critically evaluate their content (Levitskaya, 2022).

In the context of choosing a profession, media literacy plays a key role. A young person with media competencies can:

- To study various sources of information about professions and specialties of secondary vocational education. He can analyze information on the official websites of educational institutions, in professional publications, on specialized forums, in interviews with representatives of different professions;

- "Critically evaluate the information received. It is necessary to be able to distinguish subjective opinion from objective data, check information for reliability, determine the purpose of publication (advertising, education, propaganda), take into account the reputation of the source of information" (Bimrose, Brown, 2019);

- To form your own opinion about the profession and make an informed decision. He can evaluate his interests, abilities, opportunities, compare them with the requirements of the profession and make an informed choice of professional self-realization.

Thus, media literacy is an integral part of the profession selection process (Myasnikova, 2015). It allows young people to receive objective information, evaluate it from a critical point of view and make an informed choice of their future path. It is important to instill skills and interest in media literacy from an early age in order to help the future generation of Russians navigate the complex information space and make responsible decisions regarding the choice of future professional activities.

Speaking about the development of critical thinking in the structure of media literacy, it would be wrong to talk only about media literacy, since it does not exist in a vacuum, but is closely intertwined with other concepts — computer literacy, media and information literacy (MIG is a concept proposed by UNESCO in 2007), digital literacy. Yandex specialists have determined the level of digital literacy of modern Russian schoolchildren in grades 5-11 in various parameters above 80 % (<https://tass.ru/obschestvo/21214715>).

Experts at the Skysmart Online School believe that the proportion of those with an advanced level of digital competencies has remained unchanged since 2019 and is 27% (<https://skysmart.ru/articles/programming/cifrovaya-gramotnost>). UNESCO IITE experts believe that MIG is a complex concept that "covers all competencies related to information literacy and media literacy, including digital or technological literacy. In the context of MIG, the most important are the diverse interrelated competencies necessary to improve people's interaction with information and media, including for educational purposes and situations" (<https://iite.unesco.org/ru/mig/>). It seems that the MIG level of schoolchildren will require more complex and comprehensive tools for its assessment.

Thus, from the point of view of developing their own critical thinking in terms of choosing professions through the vocational education system, including those primarily related to the development of digital transformations, the modern Russian student already faces a difficult task – which literacy should he develop at school and further – computer, media, media and information, digital or other determined, among other things, by the current state of economic and information wars.

2. Materials and methods

As an empirical base, data from a sociological survey conducted by the Center for Economics of Continuing Education of the Presidential Library in the spring of 2024 among students of educational organizations of secondary vocational education were used. The sociological survey was conducted among students of secondary vocational education, studying in the last year of full-time education in the Sverdlovsk, Volgograd and Ivanovo regions. The sample consisted of 1098 people.

3. Discussion

The system of secondary vocational education is becoming increasingly popular among graduates of both ninth and eleventh grades. Most researchers came to the conclusion that having a practice-oriented orientation, the vocational education system is more interesting to young people for a number of reasons: shorter study periods; the possibility of employment at partner enterprises of the college; the possibility of obtaining a related profession/specialty; high demand for workers and mid-level specialists in regional labor markets. In addition, as the results of sociological surveys by the Center for Economics of Continuing Education of the RANEPA showed, 40.5% of the surveyed students of professional educational organizations replied that they did not want to take the Unified State Exam; 34.1% of the respondents had no interest in studying at high school and university; 27.3% seek to enter the labor market faster and 18.4% have the opportunity to earn well; lack of 14.2% noted financial opportunities to prepare and enter a university. A fairly high proportion of school graduates who joined the vocational school on the advice of teachers is 10.5%. Thus, the motives for choosing training in the system of secondary vocational education and its specifics should be the basis for the development of mechanisms for vocational guidance work.

An interesting picture emerges of the formation of professional choice by graduation. The survey showed that only 36.1% had a good idea of what they wanted to do professionally, and 21.1% had a weak idea of their future specialty. As a result, poor knowledge of the world of professions and the situation on the labor market often leads young people to join the ranks of the unemployed. Thus, at least this fifth of the respondents falls into the risk group of employment (including in the specialty), which is critical in the context of the need to provide the economy of the regions with mid-level specialists.

Some concern is also caused by the fact that among the main reasons for choosing a college course, young people name, in addition to interest in their chosen specialty (51.5% of respondents answered this way), but also the advice of parents (31.6%) (Figure 1).

In addition, 13.3% of young people replied that they did not care where to go at all. Thus, it can be noted that none of the respondents, when choosing a future profession, was guided by their real capabilities and their individual characteristics, and also quite frivolously chose their professional track, giving the right to choose to relatives. This is evidenced by the fact that 51.2% of college students already want to change their training profile in the process of studying. Logically, the question arises about the methods of modern career guidance and its effectiveness.

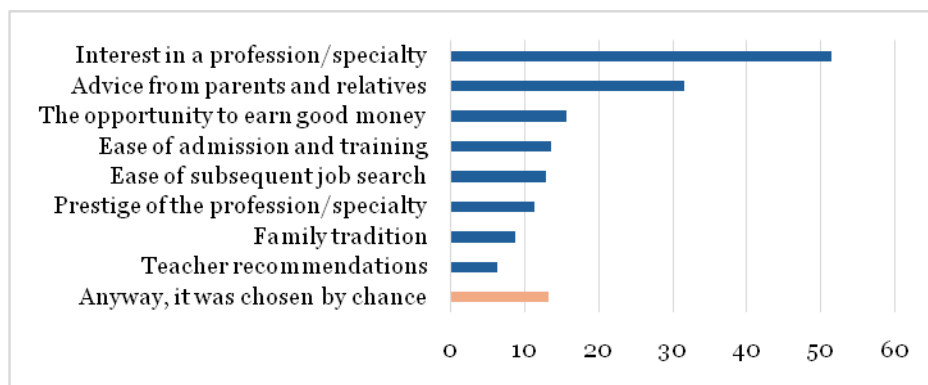


Fig. 1. Reasons for choosing the direction of vocational training, % of college students surveyed

Modern education is facing a new reality: Generation Z, who grew up in the digital age, has different values and style of thinking than previous generations. This imposes new requirements on career guidance, which should take into account the characteristics of this generation and be as adaptive as possible to modern demands (Bakanov, Vershinina, 2020).

Traditional methods of career guidance, such as lectures, meetings with representatives of professions, career guidance tests, are not effective enough for modern youth who are accustomed to a fast flow of information, multitasking and visual content (Kuzmina, 2013). It is important to understand that the current generation has a clip-based mindset, preferring short, dynamic videos, interactive formats and receiving information through social networks.

Against the background of these realities, career-oriented media projects available on the Internet are becoming a real find. These projects can be developed by both federal agencies and private manufacturers, offering a variety of formats and opportunities for career guidance.

An example of successful media projects can be considered:

- "Projectoria" (offers users the opportunity to choose a profession, take a test, participate in contests and surveys);

- "Ticket to the future" (a project that allows students to receive comprehensive information about specialties through communication with employers).

The advantage of media projects in the field of professional orientation of young people are:

- Accessibility: Internet resources are available 24/7, convenient for independent work and allow you to get information at any time.

- "Interactivity: the use of interactive formats, videos, games and tests makes career guidance more exciting and attractive for young people of different age cohorts" (Ignatev et al., 2019);

- Relevance: media projects are constantly updated, reflecting the latest changes in the labor market and offering information about promising professions.

It is necessary to indicate the main problems of career guidance work with young people:

- Its fragmentation: methods of career guidance, including digital ones, do not complement each other, but function in isolation, there are no uniform approaches and requirements for their implementation;

- Calculation for the average child: the proposed standard tests cannot take into account the individual characteristics and talents of students;

- There is a lack of specific information, as many media projects offer a general overview of professions without delving into the specifics of a particular specialty, requirements for professional skills, the labor market and career prospects.

The experience of Western countries shows that the career guidance system has been actively using mass media in recent years (Fedorov et al., 2020). Among the main trends in the use of media for career guidance are the following:

1. Digital Career Information Systems (CIS). CIS is a set of digital tools that provide users with information about professions, educational institutions, the labor market, and also help with choosing a career path. (Bakshi, Goss, 2019). The advantage of CIS is that their design and organization are designed for different categories of users.

2. Labor market Information Systems (IRT):

– forecasting the demand for specialists, IRT uses mathematical models and statistical data to predict the demand for specialists in various industries in the future;

– information about professions and training programs.

Examples of IRT include the Labor Market Information System (Switzerland); Eurostat (European Union) and Bureau of Labor Statistics (USA).

Online interactive career guidance systems are specialized online platforms that provide interactive resources for career guidance.

The main functions of online platforms:

- Virtual tours of educational institutions;
- Online consultations with professionals;
- Interactive tests and surveys;
- Group discussions and forums.

The advantage of these online platforms is the ability to create personal portfolios describing skills, qualifications, and work experience.

3. The use of chatbots in career guidance is aimed at automating the information of young people, identifying ways to solve the problem of choosing a profession.

4. Using career guidance applications that use the GPS capabilities of mobile devices to inform about employment and training opportunities. The advantage of the applications is the ability to provide complex information in an understandable and attractive form with easy navigation for young people.

5. Career simulators with improved AI. Career simulators with advanced AI can contribute to understanding the consequences depending on the decision being made regarding the options.

The undoubted advantage of using mass media is the ability to reach different categories of populations. So, as an example, the broadcasts of the weekly radio program Heta (South Africa) together with SABC Education in 10 official languages of the country for rural youth can be cited.

Thus, young people should be able to critically and subjectively evaluate the information they receive in order to form a stable idea of their future specialty.

Discussions with the participation of the authors on the issues under consideration were held within the framework of the activities of the RANEPА and the scientific and project activities of the IPCC (practical conference "Media education...", 2023; II International Scientific and Practical Conference, 2024; XXV National Scientific Conference, 2024).

4. Results

Based on the results of a sociological study of the behavior of students of the SPE system, we can identify the main trend – the increasing importance of the quality of the digital services offered when choosing a college. This is evidenced by the results of a sociological survey (Figure 2).

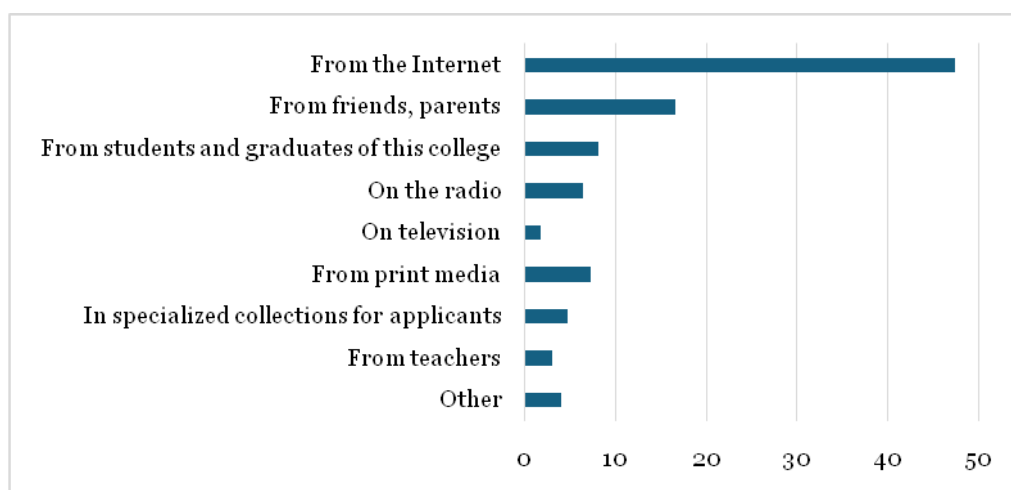


Fig. 2. Sources of information about the college of study, % of the surveyed college students

Media preferences, whether they are movies, music, video games, social media or news channels, have a profound impact on the values of young people. First of all, media images convey certain ideals and behaviors that become standards for imitation and certain worldviews. Cinema

and the Internet, as two titans of the media industry, dominate the production of these images, having a profound impact on various aspects of people's lives, from their attitude to the characters to their choice of profession. Cinema plays an important role in the professional orientation of young people, which is associated with:

- duplication of reality. Cinema, together with its animation and multimedia, possessing incredible power of influence, actually assumes the function of duplicating reality. Films create an attractive, simplified copy of our lives, forming ideas about norms, behaviors and values.

- the creation of ideals and the formation of a cultural code. Movie characters become role models, broadcasting desired professional and personal qualities. Films can both maintain interest in certain professions and form inflated expectations leading to disappointment in reality, including influencing the formation of the spiritual and moral sphere of young Russians - future professionals.

- social context. Cinema reflects the current problems and trends of society, acting as an instrument of both propaganda and criticism. Films can influence public opinion, motivate to change or, conversely, lull vigilance, form attitudes demanded by the state and society for the development of social design, including in the format of media volunteering.

A wide range of films, animated films, and interactive games offered for career guidance with the development of digital technologies poses a difficult task of choosing in an information glut. The world of professions is changing rapidly, and what was relevant yesterday may be unclaimed tomorrow. How can we find a middle ground to captivate modern children without getting stuck in the past, but also without running too far into the future?

On the one hand, there are professions that, like eternal values, retain their importance for decades. Doctor, teacher, engineer – these and many other professions remain relevant and necessary. However, if we are talking about modern schoolchildren, their interests often lie in a completely different plane. A world where reality is often mixed with virtual reality, where technology is changing the usual way of life, attracts young people to professions related to IT, digital marketing, artificial intelligence, robotics.

That is why the task of a teacher and educator using cinema, film education and media pedagogy for career guidance in the field of vocational education and training becomes even more difficult. Of course, Soviet films can be an excellent source of information about traditional professions. They often show vivid examples of how people give themselves to their favorite business, what difficulties they face, and how they achieve success. However, there are also pitfalls. Modern teenagers can perceive such films as "relics" of the past, without finding in them a reflection of their own aspirations and interests.

In this case, modern films come to the rescue, capable of reviving interest in the "classics" and presenting modern professions in a bright and fascinating light. For example, films about doctors, such as *Dr. House*, *Ambulance*, *Grey's Anatomy*, demonstrate not only the difficulties and obstacles faced by doctors, but also their non-standard solutions, their desire to save lives. They show that medicine is not only traditional methods of treatment, but also innovative approaches, the use of high technologies, as well as continuous self-development.

As for the IT sphere, the film *Social Network*, which tells about the creation of Facebook, "can become a fascinating lesson about how an idea can turn into a global project, how to be able to work in a team and make quick decisions, and how important it is to be flexible in a changing world" (Bakanov, Vershinina, 2020). And the film *The Imitation Game*, about the decryption of Enigma, shows the role of intelligence and logic in solving complex problems, and how knowledge in mathematics and computer science can change history. It is also important to pay attention to films dedicated to the "professions of the future".

For example, *Interstellar*, which shows space travel, can inspire you to study astronomy, rocket science or space engineering. The films *Out of the Machine* and *She* demonstrate the development of artificial intelligence, robotics and programming, and *Blade Runner 2049* raises issues of bioengineering and genetics.

As an addition to films, you can and should use documentaries that tell in more detail about specific professions, the history of their development and current trends.

A sociological survey of young people revealed their preferences when choosing films that have a certain influence on the choice of specialty (Figure 3).

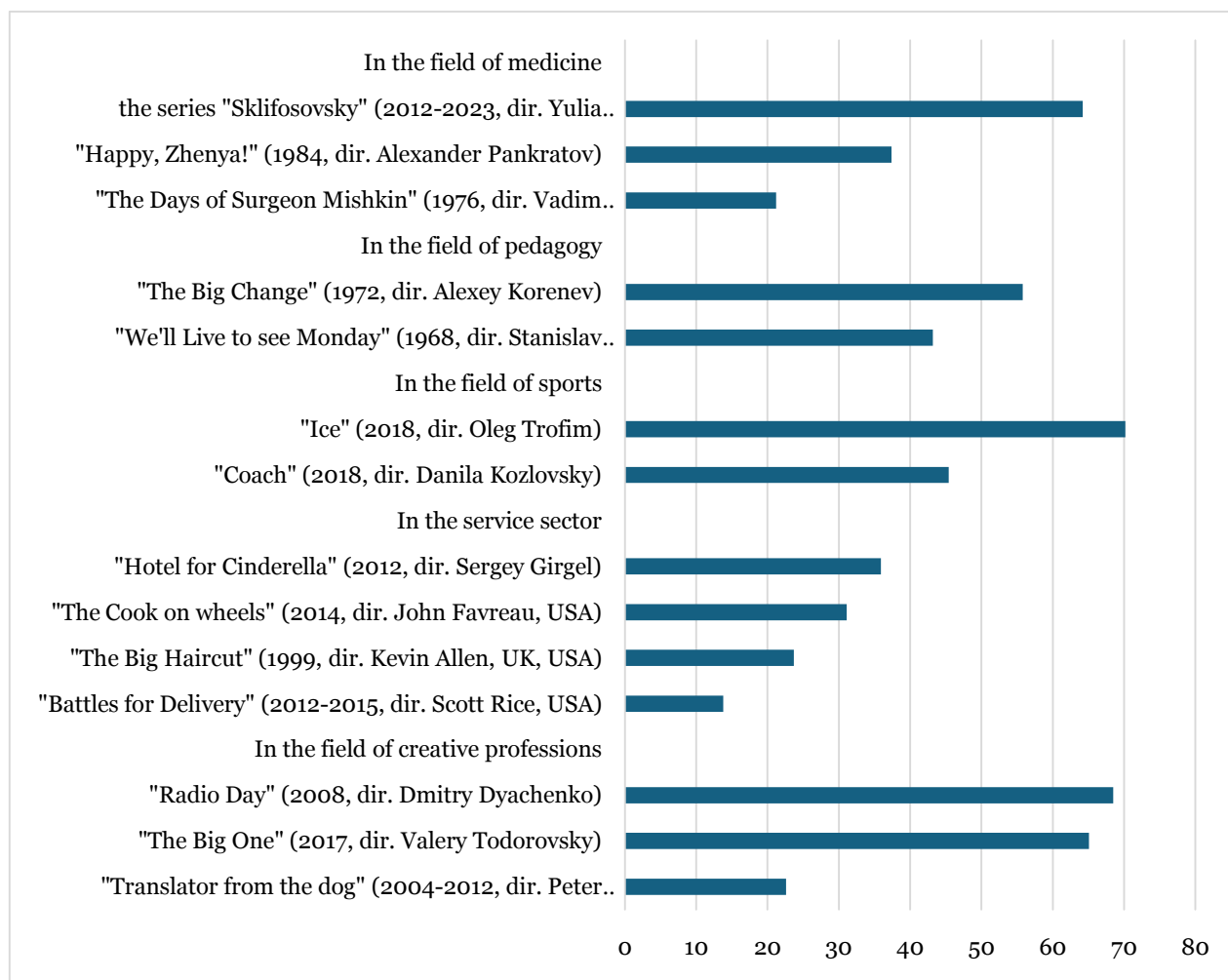


Fig. 3. A selection of films recommended by college students as part of career guidance

Thus, using cinema as a career guidance tool, you can captivate children with creative stories, show them a variety of professions, tell them about their history and about modern challenges. It is important to use both classic and modern tapes, taking into account the interests and age of the audience. The main factors influencing the professional choice of young people can be formulated as follows:

- Choosing a profession. Movie characters and images broadcast on the Internet can play a significant role in the professional self-determination of young people. The attractiveness of a profession seen in a movie or on a popular blog can be a catalyst for choosing a future career.

- Formation of values. Media images carry a certain set of values, which can be both positive and destructive. Unfiltered perception of these images can lead to uncritical acceptance of questionable ideals or behaviors.

- Social adaptation. Media images can influence young people's ideas about the norms of behavior, the fashion of communication and relationships. The discrepancy between these representations of reality can lead to difficulties in the process of socialization.

It must be said that the influence of media images on young people is ambiguous. The perception of information is influenced by many factors, such as age, level of education, personal values and critical thinking. There are a sufficient number of media resources that help young people navigate the information flow and critically evaluate media content. In this regard, it is necessary to develop media literacy skills among young people in order to minimize the negative impact of media images and use their potential for good.

5. Conclusion

The use of modern educational technologies makes the process of career guidance exciting and effective. In particular, feature films that allow you to look behind the scenes of many

professions, give students the opportunity to try on the role of professionals in various fields, to face the real tasks and challenges of the profession.

The influence of media images on modern society, especially on young people, is multifaceted and complex. Cinema and the Internet, as the two main producers of these images, play a huge role in shaping our worldview, values and behaviors.

The main role of media literacy is not only to avoid becoming a victim of information fakes. Media literacy is aimed at forming the foundations of media culture, media worldview and thinking among young people by means of screen creativity. This will provide an opportunity for the younger generation to develop civil-patriotic, spiritual-moral and information-legal competencies.

To successfully solve the problem of career guidance, it is necessary to create a unified system that will rely on the integration of traditional and digital methods. It is also important to increase the competence of teachers, career guidance specialists and psychologists so that they can effectively use modern tools and techniques. However, it is important to remember that career guidance is not just about finding information. It is necessary to take into account the individual interests, inclinations and abilities of each, as well as to provide young people with the opportunity to receive individual expert advice. Combining traditional career guidance methods with modern digital tools will create a more effective and convenient system for preparing young people to choose a profession and build a successful career.

There is also a clearly expressed political order to solve these tasks. In his instructions from 2021 on the development of film education at school and from 2023 on the development of animation as a creative industry, the Head of State identified the main players responsible for the implementation of state policy in this area – the Government of the Russian Federation and the Agency for Strategic Initiatives in terms of animation development, as well as the Ministry of Education of Russia (responsible for the development of the PDF as a whole) and the Ministry of Culture of Russia in terms of the development of film education at school.

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