

THE DEVELOPMENT OF MEDIA LITERACY AND COMPETENCE OF STUDENTS IN EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE

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Abstract: The article is devoted to the problem of development of media literacy and competence in educational practice. Main objective is to define opportunities and restrictions of usage of training technologies as means of improvement of media literacy and media competence of students. The authors analyzed the main approaches (New Media Literacy, Critical Media Studies, Medium Theory, Pragmatism) and the most popular model to understanding of media literacy (Mediawijzer.net). According to this model authors defined key elements of media competence. Two cases studies from educational practice are presented. First case study is devoted to issues of development of media literacy and competence of students in the psychological disciplines learning. Second case study deals with development of media literacy and competence of students as an element that increases resistance of youth to the influence of propaganda. Authors consider the features of usage of training technologies for both cases. According to their own experience with this approach, authors have come to the conclusion, that the universal model of development of media literacy and competence in training must include four stages: 1) understanding of the influence of media on society; 2) usage of modern tools in media space; 3) communication skills in working with media resources; 4) strategies of using media for personal achievement. Authors admit that this approach offers a useful tool for improving the media literacy and competence of students in educational practice.

Introduction

The growing influence of the media on virtually all spheres of human life and social processes is one of the global trends, the spread of which at the instant moment is felt in different parts of the planet. Active introduction of various media education programs launched under the auspices of UNESCO and aimed at the development of media culture and the formation of individual readiness for effective and safe media interaction has become a peculiar answer to this. The provision of appropriate status for media education programs, as set out in the recommendations of the European Parliament (2007) and the European Commission (2009) is an indication of the realization of this social need.

These recommendations include the introduction of educational programs for various age and social groups, among which a special place is given to student youth who is able to distribute the acquired knowledge and skills in society most effectively. The development of media literacy and media competence of the students themselves requires the use of active learning methods, which are relevant for them.

The problem of the development of media literacy and media competence has been a subject of close attention of researchers for many years. During this time, several interesting approaches to its study were formed.

One of these approaches is New Media Literacies, which is considered to be the dominant conceptual paradigm among researchers. The majority of media education programs have been developed on the basis

of this approach. For representatives of New Media Literacies (H. Jenkins, 2006; C. Luke, 2007), the point of reference is the interest of citizens in the media, which determines the specifics of their interaction with traditional media and the peculiarities of their use of social media. Interaction with social media is given special attention, because it opens up opportunities for recreation and self-expression for the citizens, allows them to produce media content and form their own information space. The main emphasis of this approach is made on participants' familiarization of educational programs, the latest media technologies and Internet resources, which open up the way for their self-realization. The basic criteria for assessing the media literacy and media competence, according to the representatives of this approach, is the ability to search for information and possess modern media technologies to exchange relevant information with other people, in case free access to Internet resources and social media is provided (R. Hobbs; 2010)..

Another approach - Critical Media Studies has the largest number of supporters among educators and psychologists, because the views of the representatives of these branches of scientific knowledge were the basis for its development. For representatives of Critical Media Studies (D. Kellner& J. Share, 2007) the starting point is the position about the manipulating impact of media on users. That is why, in the process of media education, the development of a critical attitude to information and sources of its dissemination, the ability to resist manipulations in the information space is most important for the representatives of this approach. The basic criteria for assessing the media literacy and media competence, according to the representatives of this approach, is the ability to understand informational messages using critical thinking, quality analysis and authentication skills, ability to use reflection to reduce the negative effects that arise in the consciousness under the influence of media (I. Aguaded-Gómez, R. Tirado-Moruetaa, I. Hernando-Gómez 2015). This approach has many supporters in Ukraine among the developers of specialized media education programs. This is quite natural, to look for the danger of external advocacy and the current state of relations with neighbor countries.

The views of the representatives of another approach - Medium Theory have much in common with the two previous ones. However, in this conceptual paradigm there are certain peculiarities. Representatives of Medium Theory focus on the study of the real practice of social interaction that occurs between people indirectly through modern media technology (M. McLuhan, 1972; J. Meyrowitz, 2009). The basic criteria for assessing the media literacy and media competence, according to the representatives of this approach, is the ability to generate media content, because this provides creative self-realization and is based on the selective acquisition of media technologies, promotes the creation of social interaction systems based on the awareness of their own goals and needs of the potential target audience (I. Aguaded-Gómez, R. Tirado-Moruetaa, A. Hernando-Gómez, 2015).

In recent years, another approach is gradually gaining popularity - Pragmatism. Representatives of this approach (L. Mason & S.A. Metzger, 2012) believe that the development of media literacy and media

competence should be based on the analysis of informational messages and media content and the capture of modern forms of communication taking into account social and transnational trends. The basic criteria for assessing the media literacy and media competence, according to the representatives of this approach, is the ability to develop their own communication activities on the principles of social responsibility and ethics, to spread the acquired knowledge, skills and abilities among people who belong to the circle of real social interaction (family, friends, colleagues, other formal and informal communities) of participants in media education programs (I. Aguaded-Gómez, R. Tirado-Morueta, Á.Hernando-Gómez, 2015).

The aim of the article is to describe the peculiarities of the development of media competence and to search for new ways of activating the reflection of student youth in relation to its interaction with the media space in the educational process.

Model and methods of development of media competence

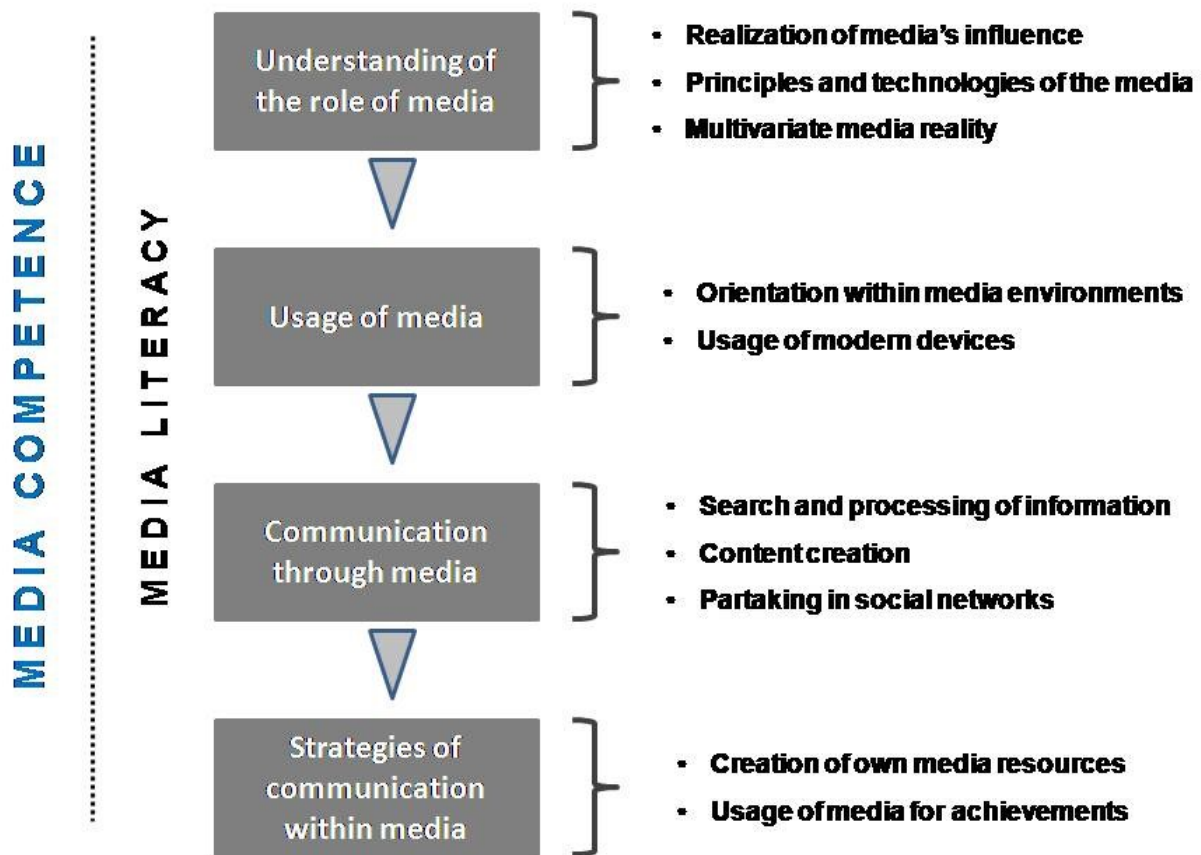
Based on the main approaches to understanding "media competence" and "media literacy" researchers create different models. The most popular of these is the Media Literacy Model, developed by a group of experts from Mediawijzer.net (B. Delver, F. Evers, L. Hop, D. Lechner, J. Leek, J. Pardoën, R. Pijpers, M. Toonen, G. van der Wijk, 2013). In our research we take into account the creative potential of the ideas suggested by colleagues-scientists. We use a modified version of this model, which is aimed at developing media competence during the development of educational programs and trainings (Figure 1).

According to this model, we think that the main areas of development of media competence can be: 1) development of understanding of the role of media in society (increasing media influence, principles of work and technology of media operation, multivariate media reality); 2) development of the skills of using modern media (orientation in the media environment, the use of modern equipment, programs and applications); 3) development of communication skills in the media space (search and processing of information, content creation, partaking in social networks); 4) development of strategies for interaction with the media (selection and creation of own media resources, use of media for their own achievements).

In process of the development of media education programs and trainings we pay particular attention to the selection of active learning methods that, while working with student youth, should be relevant to the target audience, contain innovative components, meet the requirements of higher education in organizing and provide training.

The analysis of modern trends shows that the methods of active training, which: contain elements of gamification and interactivity, allow the use of Internet resources and social media, provide opportunities for the expression of independent creative activity and self-realization, provide conditions for cooperation in execution training exercises and tasks have the greatest potential in working with students

FIGURE 1. Model of development of media competence



Source: ORIGINAL AUTHORS 'ILLUSTRATION CREATED BY THE MEDIAWIJZER.NET

Web-quest as a method of active learning meet to these requirements. This method involves a search format of classes, during which most of the material or all information with which students work, is obtained from the outside (from a teacher or coach / from the Internet).

Usually different programs are used: from simple resources to distribute text or other documents (Dropbox, Google Docs) or profiles on social networks (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) to specially created sites.

The standard set of basic structural elements of a web-quest includes: (1) introduction, (2) task, (3) process, (4) source, (5) evaluation and conclusions. An example of usage of this method has been described in detail in our previous publications (O. Sosniuk, I. Ostapenko, 2016).

However, we now optionally (but quite often) add another element – lifehack (6), which is an option for conceptualizing acquired knowledge and experience in the terms of "wisdom of life" in a form suitable for the transfer of information to any average or not well-informed person.

This element is especially useful in educational programs or trainings aimed at the development of media competence, which a priori provides an option to create their own content.

Depending on the level of training, the level of awareness, the presence / absence of time limits, the Lifehack may take different forms. It can be a simple story using hand-written tools for illustrations, the creation of interactive posters, comics, presentations, audio or video clips. The choice of form may vary depending on the stage of the educational program or the training. In the initial stages, more simple forms that do not require serious additional training are used, in the final stages – more complex, requiring special technical skills and perfect knowledge of media technologies.

In the process of development of educational or training programs aimed at developing media competence, it is useful to conduct individual or group interviews first.

Usually, to create educational programs for the development of media competence in the interview process we find out the peculiarities of the access students / trainers have to media resources, the degree of media awareness and awareness in media technology, the nature of media interaction and the specifics of activity in social media, the degree of possession of technical means (programs, applications) necessary for creating their own media content, available experience of using media resources to achieve their own goals (blogging, own channel on YouTube, promotion of their own profiles in social networks). Obtaining this information allows you to find tasks that may be interesting in content and relevant to the means necessary for their realization.

In addition to web-quests in educational practice, we often use other methods that involve creating their own content for students. Among them, a special role is assigned to comics.

Comics is multimodal text containing images and texts. In fact, the comics is illustrative and other images placed next to a thoughtful sequence for the transfer of information and obtaining aesthetic feedback from the viewer.

In educational practice, the use of comics helps students to improve understanding of complicated learning material and facilitates the development of their media competence. Next, we'll take a look at some examples of comics usage from our educational practice.

Case study from educational practice

From time to time we ask students to make comics, which are dedicated to hard-understandable questions. Usually, students use virtual resources with free access (like StoryBoardThat). Comics are posted in special groups in social medias. Then, we discuss comics on seminars and on-line. There is an example below of a comic book developed by students within the discipline "Fundamentals of psychosemantics" to reveal the peculiarities of the development of the personality's system of constructs (Figure 2).

Picture 1.

She: Hi!

He: You look very cute, as usual

Main text: They have lived in the same town for many years. She has always considered him a friendly, kind, strong and clever person.

Picture 2.

She: Shall we go to the shop at 5 o'clock?

He: Yeah, fine.

Main text: One morning they decided to go to the shop together.

Picture 3.

She: Oh! Oh! Oh!

Main text: He didn't come, because he had forgotten. But she has forgiven him.

Picture 4.

She: Can you go to the shop, please?

He: Yeah, no problems!

Main text: Once in the morning she asked him to go shopping.

Picture 5.

He: I'll do it later!

Main text: Instead of this he bought nothing and played basketball with friends.

Picture 6.

She: OK, things happen!

Main text: She was forced to buy anything herself, but has forgiven him again.

Picture 7.

She: Can you help me with the report for my boss?

He: Yeah, you are welcome!

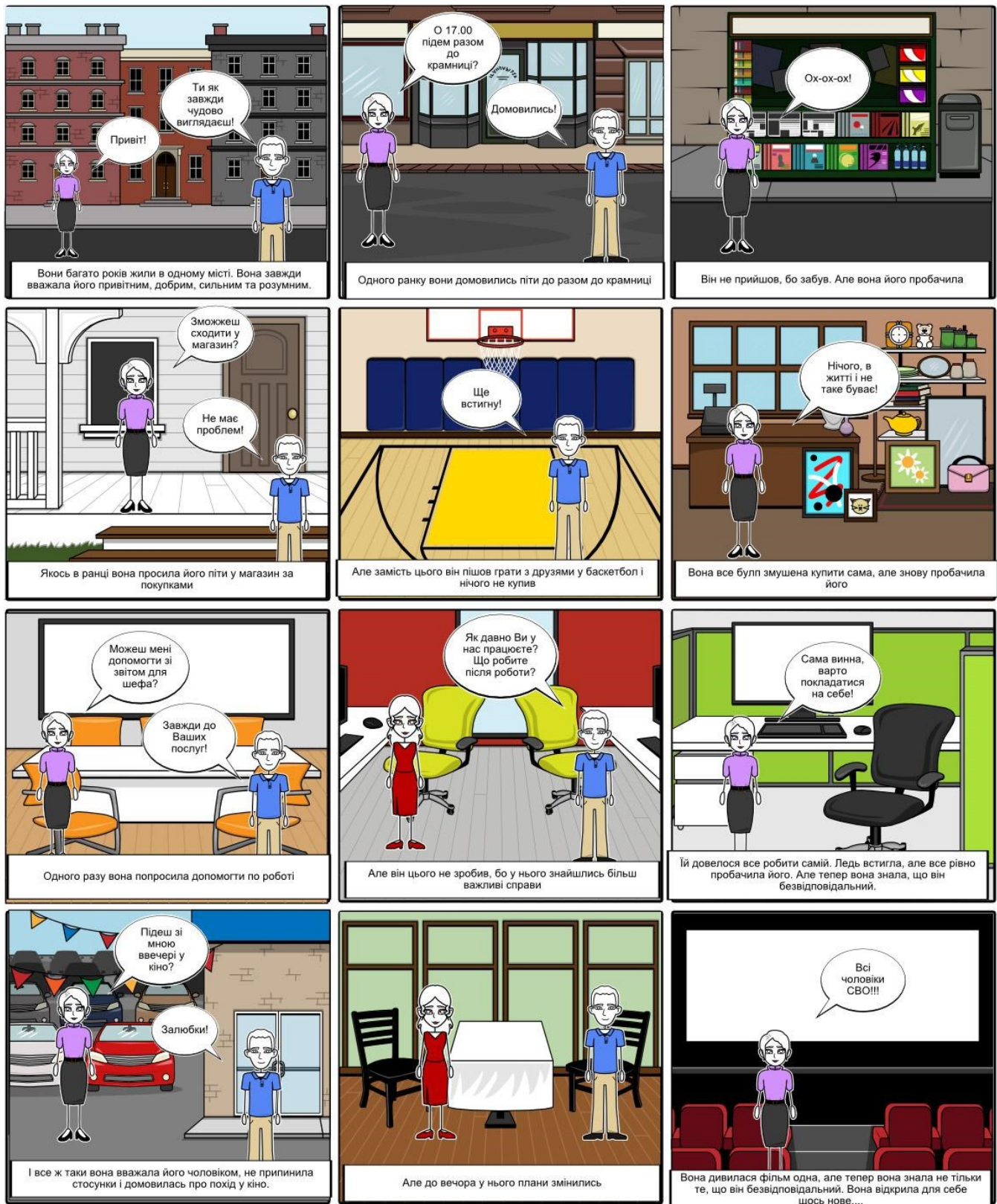
Main text: Once she asked him to help at work.

Picture 8.

He: How long have you been working here?

Main text: But he didn't, because he was busy with something more important.

FIGURE 2. Comics «Development of constructs system: simply about complexity» (in Ukrainian)



Source: Own

Picture 9.

She: That's my fault, I had to rely on myself!

Main text: She had to do everything by herself. She hardly managed to finish on time, but has forgiven him. But she found out, that he was irresponsible.

Picture 10.

She: Will you go to the cinema with me in the evening?

He: With pleasure!

Main text: Anyway, she considered him a man, so she didn't brake up with him and arranged to go to the cinema with him.

Picture 11.

Main text: But he has changed his plans until the evening

Picture 12.

She: All men are ***holes!

Main text: She watched the film alone, but she knew not only that fact, that he was irresponsible. She found out something new...

Case study from training practice

We also use the method of creating comics in training practice for the development of media competence and increasing the resistance of youth to the influence of propaganda. Sometimes we go further and we make short films on comic strips together with students.

Below there are frames from one of those "Think with your own mind!". Films about the effect of Russian propaganda (Figure 3).

In the process of creation of the film, students learned about how TV propaganda is being created and how such information is made through news releases.

In addition, they reconstructed the well-known myths of Russian propaganda (the myth "About 2 slaves and 2 hectares of land", allegedly promised as a reward for Ukrainian soldiers, the myth "About the crucified boy", allegedly a victim of Ukrainian soldiers, etc.).

Of course, all these myths have been refuted. However, we do not exclude that these products of Russian propaganda could affect the consciousness of people who are separated from the open media space.

FIGURE 3. Frames from the movie " Think with your own mind!"



Source: Own

If in the list of tasks the training involves the recognition of fake information / fake texts, for heating, in the initial stage, it may be a task of conducting a psycho-linguistic expertise of texts or a task for the evaluation of information messages.

In the case when the main tasks of the training are aimed at recognizing manipulations, warming up tasks can be in the form of analytical viewing of films with the obligatory preliminary familiarization with techniques and mechanisms of manipulation in the media space. At the same time, in the final stages, tasks aimed at the development of the skills of using software applications specially developed for content

verification (Findexif.com, Foto Forensics, Google Search by Image, TinEye, WebMii, Jeffrey's Exif Viewer, JPEGsnoop, Geofeedia, Wolfram Alpha).

In the process of formation of a resource list, it is useful to use not only your own teacher / trainer's working-out, but also links to media resources (including educational materials on YouTube, educational and feature films), useful open information platforms (for example, such as Media Sapiens - <http://osvita.mediasapiens.ua/>, Stop Fake - <https://www.stopfake.org/kak-raspoznat-fejk/>). The above list should not be exhaustive, so that students / participants of the training have incentives for independent information retrieval.

Generally, this approach lets us to: 1) increase students' interest to the material, which is being studied; 2) talk to the students using the comics language, which is simple and relevant for them; 3) simplify the understanding of complicated questions and problems; 4) develop additional skills of working with different problems and resources, which are useful for studies (including: digital competence and audiovisual language); 5) encourage the interaction of students in virtual space.

Conclusion

The main areas of development of media competence can be: 1) development of understanding of the role of media in society (increasing media influence, principles of work and technology of media functioning, multidimensional media reality), 2) development of skills in using modern media (orientation in the media environment, use of modern equipment, programs and applications), 3) development of communication skills in the media space (search and processing of information, content creation, participation in social networks), 4) development of strategies for media interaction (choice and creation of own media resources, usage of media for their own achievements).

Web-quests and comics belong to innovative methods of active learning that are suitable for the development of media competency of student youth. These methods contain elements of gamification and interactivity, allow the use of Internet resources and social media, provide opportunities for students / participants of training to demonstrate their own creative activity and self-realization, and provide circumstances for cooperation in carrying out educational exercises and tasks.

In process of development of media competence, web-quests and comics can be used for distance and classroom learning, support for learning engagement and creating inspirational motivation in the learning / training process, which provides a higher level of effectiveness of such innovative educational and training programs in comparison with traditional programs.

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