

## **THE CORE COMPETENCIES OF MEDIA AND INFORMATION LITERACY**

### **ABSTRACT**

In the following chapter, the need for media and information literacy is considered on the background of the increasing value of information as a product, object, and subject of human activity. Such an approach expands the scale of the movement for civic education, including teachers as the main actors of change. The information literacy is viewed in the chapter as a set of competences necessary to obtain, understand, evaluate, adapt, generate, store and present information used to analyze problems and make decisions. It is emphasized that the dynamic transformation of modern society has led to the inclusion of media and information literacy in a set of basic skills means that today young people need. In view of various forms of information and communication technologies influencing our private, economic, political, social life, some new types of competencies needed for active and successful participation in the life of the information society are singled out.

From the author's perspective, acquisition of media and information literacy skills opens up a wide range of opportunities for teachers and pupils, enriching the educational environment and allowing the process of teaching and learning to be more efficient and dynamic. Media literacy is addressed in the chapter as a process of teaching the use of media and enhancing the critical perception of the media. Training in media literacy is multifaceted, therefore different approaches are used to teach it. While learning media literacy, students acquire the skills of the formation of independent views and participation in the life of civil society, as well as a safe media use, and self-expression. The key objective of media literacy is a critical autonomous relation to all media. Therefore, an important element in teaching media literacy is the inclusion of students in the work with media products, which affects the formation of media competence, meaning the ability to understand, analyze and evaluate the content of the media. The conclusion is made that media and information literacy skills can be used as tools for freedom of expression, pluralism, intercultural dialogue and tolerance, and as contributors to democratic debate.

Key words: information literacy, media literacy, competence, media education.

### **STRESZCZENIE**

W niniejszym rozdziale potrzeba mediów i umiejętności informacyjnych jest rozważana na tle rosnącej wartości informacji jako produktu, obiektu i przedmiotu ludzkiej działalności. Takie podejście rozszerza skalę ruchu na edukację obywatelską, w tym nauczycieli jako głównych aktorów zmian. Umiejętność korzystania z informacji jest postrzegana w tym rozdziale jako zestaw kompetencji niezbędnych do uzyskania, zrozumienia, oceny, adaptacji, generowania, przechowywania i prezentacji informacji wykorzystywanych do analizy problemów i podejmowania decyzji. Podkreśla się, że dynamiczna transformacja współczesnego społeczeństwa doprowadziła do włączenia mediów i umiejętności informacyjnych do zestawu podstawowych umiejętności, które dziś potrzebują młodzi ludzie. Ze względu na różne formy technologii informacyjnych i komunikacyjnych wpływających na nasze życie prywatne, gospodarcze, polityczne i społeczne, wyróżniono niektóre nowe rodzaje kompetencji potrzebnych do aktywnego i skutecznego uczestnictwa w życiu społeczeństwa informacyjnego.

Z punktu widzenia autora, zdobywanie umiejętności korzystania z mediów i umiejętności informacyjnych otwiera przed nauczycielami i uczniami szerokie możliwości, wzbogacając środowisko edukacyjne i umożliwiając bardziej efektywny i dynamiczny proces nauczania i uczenia się. Umiejętność korzystania z mediów omawiana jest w rozdziale jako proces nauczania wykorzystania mediów i wzmacniania krytycznego postrzegania mediów. Szkolenie w zakresie umiejętności korzystania z mediów jest wielowymiarowe, dlatego do jego nauczania wykorzystywane są różne podejścia. Ucząc się umiejętności korzystania z mediów, uczniowie nabywają umiejętności formułowania niezależnych poglądów i uczestnictwa w życiu społeczeństwa obywatelskiego, a także bezpiecznego korzystania z mediów i wyrażania siebie. Kluczowym celem umiejętności korzystania z mediów jest krytyczna autonomiczna relacja ze wszystkimi mediami. Dlatego ważnym elementem w nauczaniu umiejętności korzystania z mediów jest włączanie uczniów w pracę z produktami medialnymi, wpływając na kształtowanie kompetencji medialnych, co oznacza umiejętność rozumienia, analizowania i oceniania treści mediów. Wyniki badań pozwalają stwierdzić, że umiejętności korzystania z mediów i informacji mogą być wykorzystywane jako narzędzia do wolności wypowiedzi, pluralizmu, dialogu międzykulturowego i tolerancji oraz jako czynniki przyczyniające się do debaty demokratycznej.

Słowa kluczowe: umiejętność czytania, umiejętność korzystania z mediów, kompetencje, edukacja medialna.

## **1. Introduction**

The 21st century is the time when information became the most valuable product. Information markets, platforms and networks, where the data is distributed on an incomparable scale, expand their boundaries in pace with the increasing value of information as a product, object, and subject of human activity. We currently live in a world in which the quality of the information we receive considerably determines our choices and subsequent actions, including the ability to enjoy fundamental freedoms and the right to self-determination and development. Technological advances in the field of telecommunications have led to the wide dissemination of the media and other information providers (libraries, archives, the Internet, etc.) that have opened to citizens access to and the possibility of exchanging huge amounts of information. The consequence of this phenomenon is the desire of citizens to freely assess the relevance and reliability of this information, while fully exercising their right to freedom of expression and the right to receive information.

It is in this context that the need for media and information literacy (MIL) should be considered, which expands the scale of the movement for civic education, including teachers as the main actors of change.

## 2.1 Why Study the Media?

The modern society is based on the use of information and knowledge. Today it is impossible to ignore the widespread dissemination of the media, various forms of information and communication technologies, or their influence on our private, economic, political, social, etc life. Therefore, for active and successful participation in the life of the information society some new types of competencies (knowledge, skills and abilities) are needed.

The frequently used term "literacy" is often accompanied by a variety of definitions, among them "computer", "digital", "visual", "communication", "technological" and, of course, "media" and "informational"<sup>123</sup>. This tendency testifies to the dynamic transformation of modern society and the growing interest to research in this field. It is noteworthy that "literacy" today implies something much more than traditional reading and writing skills.

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<sup>1</sup> Webber, 2013, *Information literacy: A subject for the 21st century*, „Pakistan Journal of Library and Information Science” (14), 1.

<sup>2</sup> Grizzle A. et al, 2014, *Media and information literacy: policy and strategy guidelines*, UNESCO.

<sup>3</sup> Лай Х., 2006, *Руководство по информационной грамотности для образования на протяжении всей жизни*, ЮНЕСКО, "Информация для всех".

It is impossible to overestimate the importance of arithmetics, reading and writing, however, the inclusion of media and information literacy in a set of basic skills means that today young people also need to be able to search, evaluate, use and to create information for the achievement of personal, public, professional and educational goals, to understand the functions of the media and other information providers (such as databases, archives and libraries in which media resources are books).

The Alexandria Proclamation of 2005 describes information literacy and lifelong learning as the "beacons of the Information Society, illuminating the courses to development, prosperity and freedom. Information literacy empowers people in all walks of life to seek, evaluate, use and create information effectively to achieve their personal, social, occupational and educational goals. It is a basic human right in a digital world and promotes social inclusion in all nations"<sup>4</sup>.

Studies in the field of information literacy have shown that students are having difficulty assessing the reliability of the data even in the educational environment, although it is considered that technological skills and, consequently, media and information literacy skills in young people are better developed than in older generations.

The acquisition of media and information literacy skills opens up a wide range of opportunities for teachers and pupils enriching the educational environment and allowing the process of teaching and learning to be more efficient and dynamic. Efficient use of information obtained from media sources and from other information suppliers depends on the ability of people to analyze their information needs, as well also search for information and evaluate the quality of information they can access.

The media has enormous influence and power on our daily lives. They can reach vast numbers of people instantaneously. They tell us what to think about. Various information providers encourage access to it, and in some cases allow people store their own information. In addition to the media, there are and other sources of information such as reviews, reports, etc. Information can be transmitted utilizing technology or via personal communication, it can be distributed by people as mediators.

## **2.2 Information literacy**

There is an amazing abundance of information materials, content and resources – particularly on the Internet – and they all differ in the degree of accuracy, reliability and

<sup>4</sup> *Beacons of the Information Society: The Alexandria Proclamation on Information Literacy and Lifelong Learning*, <https://www.ifla.org/publications/beacons-of-the-information-society-the-alexandria-proclamation-on-information-literacy> [Accessed: 17.03.2018].

value. Information exists in a variety of forms and formats. However, before evaluating the sources of information, it is important to determine for yourself the purpose of obtaining information. This process will help to identify reliable information sources. Information recipients try to find the answer to the following questions: Which source will be the most reliable in this particular case for obtaining the information? Which sources are most likely to be fair, objective, devoid of hidden motives?

Information literacy includes the following skills:

- Identifying information needs: What am I looking for? What kind of problem am I trying to solve?
- Identifying sources of information: What sources to use: Internet, books or television? Should I use primary, secondary or tertiary sources?
- Locating or searching for information: Where should you look for information? Who should I contact?
- Analysis and assessment of the quality of information: How to know how reliable this information is?
- Organization, storage or archiving of information: How to effectively organize information from multiple sources?
- Use of information in accordance with ethical standards, effective and efficient: How should I act to observe the copyrights of information creators?
- Creating new knowledge and sharing it: How can I submit my information?

Thus, information literacy is a set of competences necessary to obtain, understand, evaluate, adapt, generate, store and present information used to analyze problems and make decisions. Information-literate people have the following basic skills: critical thinking, the ability to analyze information and use it for self-expression, the ability to independently learn, create information, the willingness to be an informed citizen and professional, take an active part in democratic processes of the community<sup>5</sup>. These core competencies are applicable in any educational context, including an educational or professional environment or for independent study.

### **2.3 Media education**

The word "media" comes from the plural of the Latin word medium, meaning "middle, something intermediate, intermediate, mediating"<sup>6</sup>. In modern usage, the term has several meanings. First, the word "media" is associated with the media, for example, newspapers,

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<sup>5</sup> Wilson C. et al, 2013, *Media and information literacy curriculum for teachers*, UNESCO.

television, radio, books and the Internet. Secondly, it is used to refer to media content: news, advertisements, electronic games and movies. Thirdly, the media can mean producers of media content: reporters, photographers, media companies, etc. Users and audience are in different interactive relationships with devices, content and media producers. The media perform a number of functions, among them stimulating communication and entertaining.

Media education, media culture, media pedagogy have recently attracted considerable attention of scholars, becoming an object of study in contemporary theoretical discourse. These topics attract the attention of researchers from such areas as pedagogical and psychological sciences, philologists, sociologists, etc.

As with the concept of "media", media literacy has several definitions. One of best known definitions, is that by P. Aufderheide (1992), who identifies it as a movement, which is designed to help to understand, to produce and negotiate meanings in a culture of images, words and sounds. According to the scholar, a media literate person can decode, evaluate, analyse and produce both print and electronic media<sup>7</sup>.

We consider the key aspect of media literacy to be an analytical approach to the media environment – the ability to perceive them critically – and the determination to express oneself through the media". In addition, we address this term as a process of teaching the use of media and enhancing media literacy. Training in media literacy is multifaceted, therefore, depending on the situation and objectives, different approaches are used to teach it.

While learning media literacy, students acquire the skills of the formation of independent views and participation in the life of civil society, as well as a safe media use, and self-expression. The key objective of media literacy is critical autonomous relation to all media. In fact, highlights in media literacy training range widely, including consumer competence, informed citizenship, social advocacy, aesthetic appreciation and expression, self-esteem.

Our contemporary world is saturated with media. On average, we spend over 15 years of our life just watching television. One-third of our lives are immersed in the media. On average people spend more than 10 hours of their day consuming media. Daily time spent with major media continues to grow among adults in France, Germany and the UK, due to an increasing amount of media multitasking via mobile devices.

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Aufderheide P., **Media Literacy. A Report of the National Leadership Conference on Media Literacy**. Aspen Institute, Communications and Society Program.

According to the survey<sup>8</sup>, TV's share of time spent remains a large part of adults' media day. Time spent with print media continues to decline as circulation rates fall. While audiences continue to read such content, they are doing so increasingly via digital sources. Nondigital radio is experiencing a similar—but less dramatic—decline. Time spent with radio will be more than triple that of print in all three countries through 2019. In 2018, average daily mobile internet time in France and Germany is predicted to cross the 2-hour mark.

Needless to say about the enormous impact of the Internet and media space on a personality formation. Therefore, an important element in teaching media literacy is the inclusion of students in the work with media products, which affects the formation of media competence, meaning the ability to understand, analyze and evaluate the content of the media<sup>9</sup>.

Media literacy includes the following core components:

- ▶ Aesthetic and creative skills: the ability to see, hear, create and interpret media content. Students can develop these skills by independently creating media content.

- ▶ Interactive skills: the ability to communicate through the media and try different media roles. These skills can be developed through collaborative learning and practice. Interactive skills indicate a willingness to express their opinions and attitudes.

- ▶ Critical analysis skills. This is the ability to interpret and understand the meaning of various media content. A student can interpret and evaluate media forms and content using various analytical tools. These skills are better developed through the study of diverse media content and genres.

- ▶ Security skills. This is the ability to find a way out of difficult situations and avoid them. The most important skills of safe behavior in the virtual space are the protection of private space and the ability to avoid malicious contacts and content.

## 2.4 Key elements of media and information literacy

Although there exist various theories, models on Information Literacy (IL) and many publications on Media Literacy (ML), there is a need to have a unified approach to these

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*Time Spent with Media in France, Germany and the UK: eMarketer's Updated Estimates and Forecast for 2014–2019*, <https://www.emarketer.com/Report/Time-Spent-with-Media-France-Germany-UK-eMarketers-Updated-Estimates-Forecast-20142019/200206410> [Accessed: 17.03.2018].

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Grizzle A. et al, 2014, *Media and information literacy: policy and strategy guidelines*, UNESCO.

concepts. In fact, the need for such integration of IL and ML is to ultimately get maximum benefit, i.e. Media and Information Literacy (MIL) for the benefit of the individuals, societies, nations of the world<sup>10</sup>.

"Media and information literacy" forms a whole range of skills, without which citizens of the XXI century can not understand the world around them<sup>11</sup>.

The concept of media and information literacy is closely linked to the role and functions of the media and other information providers. It promotes the realization of the human right to communication and self-expression. It helps to evaluate the media and other information providers on the basis of what they produce, what messages they distribute, and also evaluate the role of the target audience. The UNESCO framework is designed to provide teacher education with a programme for participating in the process of shaping and enriching the curriculum<sup>12,13</sup>.

The core components of UNESCO media and information literacy curriculum for teachers are presented in the following way<sup>14</sup>:



Persons with media and information literacy skills can receive new information about the world around them; understand the impact of the media; use the media in compliance with

<sup>10</sup> Media and Information Literacy and Intercultural Dialogue: MILID yearbook 2013, 2013, NORDICOM, University of Gothenburg.

<sup>11</sup> *Цифровое будущее. Каталог навыков медиа- и информационной грамотности*, 2013, Москва, Межрегиональный центр библиотечного сотрудничества (МЦБС).

<sup>12</sup> Wilson C. et al, 2013, *Media and information literacy curriculum for teachers*, UNESCO.

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Grizzle A. et al, 2014, *Media and information literacy: policy and strategy guidelines*, UNESCO.

<sup>14</sup> Grizzle A. et al, 2014.



security and responsibility; make informed and independent decisions; form a sense of community; participate in the life of a democratic society and a global information network; be engaged in lifelong learning; think critically; create information; use media for self-expression and creativity<sup>1516</sup>.

### 3 Conclusion

Forms and ways of expressing media are constantly evolving. Consequently, the skills of the media and information literacy must also be continuously improved. The more actively the students are trained to apply their skills in the field of media and information literacy, the deeper their understanding of the media and their structures becomes. A good way to develop personal media skills and information literacy is sharing ideas about the media with others in educational environment. Thus, media and information literacy skills can be used as tools for freedom of expression, pluralism, intercultural dialogue and tolerance, and as contributors to democratic debate.

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<sup>15</sup> *Beacons of the Information Society: The Alexandria Proclamation on Information Literacy and Lifelong Learning*, [https://www.ifla.org/publications/ beacons-of-the-information-society-the-alexandria-proclamation-on-information-literacy](https://www.ifla.org/publications/beacons-of-the-information-society-the-alexandria-proclamation-on-information-literacy) [Accessed: 17.03.2018]

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