Training of Future Specialists for the Formation of the Foundations of Media Literacy of Children of Preschool and Primary School Age

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Abstract- **In connection with the digitization of the educational process, the need for the development of critical thinking of children of senior preschool and junior school age, the development of the ability to use information in any form, to communicate, and to understand the consequences of interaction in the digital world is increasing. The article proves that media literacy of a modern people is the basis of their security in the information society. It is found out that the training of future specialists in preschool and primary education should include the formation and development of methodological competence of students for the formation of media literacy and information culture of children of preschool and junior school age, as well as the creation of an educational and informational environment in a preschool education institution. Emphasis is placed on solving the following tasks: to form the ability to implement a systematic approach to the introduction of media education in preschool and primary school; to form the ability to protect children from an aggressive media environment; to form the ability to use media technologies in order to organize media creativity of children of senior preschool and junior school age; to form a certain level of information culture of future specialists; to instill future educators' creative approach to the formation of the foundations of children's information culture; to form the need for future preschool and primary education specialists in self-education in accordance with the requirements of the information society. In the course of this study, we used the following methods: theoretical: analysis of scientific sources to determine the state of research on the problem of forming media literacy of preschool children and training future preschool education specialists to form media literacy of children. Synthesis, systematization and generalization of theoretical provisions of the problem were used; empirical: pedagogical observation of children's activities in 18 preschool education institutions, conversations with preschool education teachers regarding the implementation of activities to form the foundations of media literacy of preschool children, conversations with students about the relevance of the problem of forming media literacy of preschool children, questionnaires of future preschool education specialists of the Mykhailo Kotsiubynskyi Vinnytsia State Pedagogical University. The experimental study was conducted, the respondents of which were bachelor's degree holders of the specialty 012 Preschool Education and 013 Primary Education of Vinnytsia Mykhailo Kotsiubynskyi State Pedagogical University. The following approaches and technologies for the formation of future specialists of preschool and primary education in the ability to form the foundations of media literacy and information culture of children of preschool and senior school age have been singled out: a problem-based approach, BYOD - technology ("bring your own device"), the method of "inverted learning".**

Key words- Educational process of primary school, junior schoolchildren, educational process of preschool education institution, media literacy, information culture, innovative BYOD technology.

I. INTRODUCTION

Children are exposed to media information at an early age. In fact, they are in a media environment from birth. Information comes from everywhere - from the TV, parents' phones, computers, tablets, that is, from various devices used by parents. And although the child does not yet know how to speak, his consciousness is not developed, the information affects the subconscious and is "recorded" there, being the basis for a worldview. Later, imitating his parents, children from an early age begin to use a tablet, touch pho ne, laptop. Parents, not realizing the consequences, give their children a tablet and a phone so that they do not interfere. Thanks to this, children can hear and see information that is unacceptable to them. Therefore, it is necessary to start introducing children to possible threats on the Internet from an early age, to form the skills of safe use of gadgets, and to form a critical attitude towards information. Another problem is the lack of understanding by many parents of the importance of forming the foundations of media literacy in their children. In today's world, it is important to teach children from an early age to be conscious citizens of the digital world. Another problem is the lack of knowledge of parents about the basics of their own media literacy.

The formation of the basics of media literacy of preschool children is not new in domestic and foreign scientific research. In particular, the following were studied: the impact of media (television, Internet) on the development of infants, toddlers, and preschoolers, and how parents perceive and use media in combination with their style of conversation with children, shape not only language skills throughout life, but also other qualities [10; 3], the convergence of imagination, social-emotional learning, and media literacy [10], the importance of television and media literacy for young children [4], awareness and use of social networks by preschool children [3], digital media patterns among parents and preschoolers in Thailand [12], the impact of television on the development of young children [1], digital media and self-regulation skills of preschool children [6], Preparation future specialists in preschool and primary education to form the foundations of children's cyber safety [13].

Due to the digitalization of the educational process [5; 7], the need to develop critical thinking in older preschool children is increasing [8].

However, we have identified a contradiction between the speed of development of media technologies and the training of specialists in preschool education. The authors of the publication present their own view on solving this problem in this article.

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

In the course of this study, we used the following methods: theoretical: analysis of scientific sources to determine the state of research on the problem of forming media literacy of preschool children and training future preschool education specialists to form media literacy of children. Synthesis, systematization and generalization of theoretical provisions of the problem were used; empirical: pedagogical observation of children's activities in 18 preschool education institutions, conversations with preschool education teachers regarding the implementation of activities to form the foundations of media literacy of preschool children, conversations with students about the relevance of the problem of forming media literacy of preschool children, questionnaires of future preschool education specialists of the Mykhailo Kotsiubynskyi Vinnytsia State Pedagogical University.

The study was conducted from April to December 2024. The survey was attended by 53 full-time 2nd-year Bachelor's degree applicants from the Faculty of Preschool and Primary Education named after Valentina Voloshyna, specialty 012 Preschool Education, Vinnytsia Mykhailo Kotsiubynskyi State Pedagogical University (Vinnytsia, Ukraine).

The survey window was open for 2 weeks: from September 2 to September 16, 2024. Participation in the online survey was voluntary.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

An experimental study was conducted, the respondents of which were 53 2nd year students of the higher education degree "Bachelor" in the specialty 012 Preschool Education of the Mykhailo Kotsiubynskyi Vinnytsia State Pedagogical University, who study in the educational programs "Preschool Education. Primary Education", "Preschool Education. Speech Therapy" of the full-time and part-time forms of study. We studied the level of media literacy of future specialists. Based on the existing level of media literacy, we can plan further pedagogical work.

Respondents were offered a survey in the classtime resource, which included eight questions. 53 full-time students took the survey. A student who scored 18-20 points - a high level of media literacy, 15-17 - an average level, 12-14 - an initial level.

Let's analyze the students' answers.

In the first question, students were asked to distinguish a fact from a judgment. Only 15 answers were incorrect. Therefore, we can conclude that almost a third of the students who took the survey do not know how to distinguish fact from judgment. This, in our opinion, is a fairly large percentage.

The second question did not differ from the first in essence. But, unlike the first, it was specific: "The Ukrainian language was recognized as the most beautiful in the world after French and Persian at a language competition in Paris in 1934." This statement is a judgment, since there are no clear, generally accepted norms that would regulate the language as the most beautiful. The concept of "the most beautiful" is subjective, and therefore cannot be a fact. Only 12 respondents who took the

survey gave the correct answer to this question. Comparing the students' answers to the first question (there were 28 correct answers to the first question, and only 12 to the second), we can state that students have theoretical knowledge about the difference between a fact and a judgment, but a significant number of respondents do not have the skills to distinguish a fact from a judgment in practice.

The next question was also aimed at identifying students' ability to distinguish facts from judgments in practice. The question sounded like this: "The geographical center of Europe is located in the town of Rakhiv, surrounded by the picturesque Carpathians. Is this true?" There were 18 correct answers, which is not much different from the 12 from the previous question. Based on this, we can conclude that some judgments are so firmly embedded in our lexicon that we perceive them as facts.

The purpose of the next, fourth question was to find out whether students know what "clickbait" is. The question sounded like this: "Clickbait is: 1) usually perceived inseparably from the person who reports it and does not exist without its author; 2) the tendency to formulate sensational headlines, supported by images, to attract the attention of readers in order to force them to click on the link is the correct answer; 3) the use of information for fraudulent or selfish purposes by distorting, providing incomplete information, biased interpretation.

Of the proposed options, the second answer was correct. Surprisingly, only 11 students answered this question incorrectly, while 42 answered it correctly. Such results indicate that the students who took the survey are familiar with the concept of clickbait and understand its essence.

The next question was intended to test students' knowledge of ways to counter propaganda on a personal level. The answer had to indicate the correct algorithm of actions for this. The correct answer would be: 1- Step away from your emotions, 2- Separate facts from judgments and assessments; 3- Check the given facts; 4- Analyze the available methods of influence; 5- Ask yourself the question: who is the message aimed at, who is the target audience? What does it call or encourage? Who can benefit from it? Why is the message being spread right now?

As it turned out, this question was difficult for students, since only 10 out of 53 answered correctly.

The next, sixth question was: "What do algorithms collect about you (select all correct options)." The following options were offered to students: "your "likes" and "dislikes", "who you communicate with", "your reaction to advertising", "what you are looking for on the Internet", "personal data (status, age, city of residence, study)", "all your comments and discussions". All of these options were correct. Only 14 students from those who took the survey chose all the options.

In the next, seventh question, we aimed to find out whether students know what an information bubble is and how harmful it is. We counted the answer as correct if at least 2 arguments were named. There were only 13 incorrect answers to this question. Based on this, we can conclude that 40 students know how harmful an information bubble is. Although, there is another explanation. Since the students took the survey online, accordingly, they had the opportunity to use the Internet search. Let us note the correct answers. "You are alone with one piece of information without the opportunity to learn something else -

it is easier to manipulate you. You yourself begin to believe in the information that is heard every day, the same thing, you become dependent on it, you are convinced that it is all true", "contributes to disinformation, limits the worldview, limits critical thinking", "a person receives one-sided information, which interferes with critical thinking. The illusion is created that everyone thinks the same way, which can cause misunderstanding or aggression towards other views.

In the last, eighth question, we offered students to choose markers of fakes. Among the proposed options were the following: 1) dubious source of distribution; 2) grammatical errors, signs of translation from another language; 3) lack of specificity in the "fact"; 4) increased emotionality of the message; 5) a request to follow the link; 6) distortion / fabrication of positions, surnames, etc.; 7) inconsistency of dates, numbers, statistical data; 8) appeals, requests, conspiracy theories; 9) lack of emotion in the message. Among the proposed options, 5 and 9 are incorrect. Let's analyze the results. Unfortunately, there were no students who did not make any mistakes. One answer out of 7 was given by 7 students, two correct answers out of 7 were given by 8 students, three out of seven were given by 10 students, four out of seven were given by 10 students, five out of seven were given by 7 students, and six out of seven were given by 11 students. There were also students who chose the wrong options. If a student chose the wrong option as the correct one, the classtime resource did not count this as an incorrect answer.

Here are the final results we received: high level – 11 students, medium – 28, primary – 14. The results indicate that it is necessary to provide students – future specialists in preschool education with information about ways to develop media literacy of adults and preschool children. We also conducted a conversation with students at the end of the questionnaire. We asked the following questions to future specialists in preschool education: how relevant is the level of media literacy of a person for their effective interaction in society? How important is it to form the media literacy of preschool children? What methods of forming media literacy of preschool children do you know? Is it necessary to involve parents? What forms of interaction with parents would you choose (in addition to traditional parent meetings) in the issue of forming the media literacy of their children.

During the conversation, the students reported that media literacy is a vital quality of a modern person, since in the modern world there is a lot of multidirectional information, various fakes and propaganda. Especially under the conditions of martial law in which Ukraine is located. Also, since media technologies are developing rapidly today, and modern children are practically in a media environment from birth, the formation of their media literacy is extremely relevant. Of the methods for forming media literacy in preschool children, the students named only games and explanations. They also said that the formation of media literacy in preschool children would be more effective if they cooperate with parents. However, they could not name other forms of cooperation, except for parent meetings.

We also conducted observation of the educational process in 18 preschool educational institutions in Vinnytsia. The results of the observation are as follows: in 10 kindergartens, educators do not conduct media educational activities. In personal conversations with educators, we found out the reason.

Educators consider the sphere of forming media literacy in children to be a matter of home education. In eight other kindergartens, educators conduct special conversations, games, quests, and watching cartoons with the aim of forming media literacy in children. And also these educators conduct various activities aimed at motivating parents to learn media literacy knowledge with their children.

Based on a survey of 2nd year students of the specialty 012 Preschool Education, we offer students an elective academic discipline "Formation of the basics of media literacy of preschool children". Since modern learning has become mobile, and the teacher is no longer the only source of information, we offer non-traditional forms and methods of developing media literacy of future preschool education specialists. Such forms include visiting the media literacy labyrinth.

The Media Literacy Labyrinth is a mobile structure the height of a one-story building, consisting of 12 rooms, in each of which visitors receive useful knowledge and skills necessary to increase their media literacy in an interactive format. The Media Literacy Labyrinth "NOT BELIEVE - CHECK" was created as part of the "Dream and Act" program, which is implemented with the financial support of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and implemented by IREX in partnership with Building Ukraine Together (BUU), Making Cents International (MCI), and the International Republican Institute (IRI).

This labyrinth is the only one in Ukraine. In this labyrinth, visitors are offered interactive tasks and games that will help them "catch" fakes, expose manipulations, distinguish between fact and opinion. There is also an opportunity to test their knowledge and critical thinking skills and make a person resistant to disinformation. The website (https://mriemotadiemorazom.org/nevirrrperevirrr) contains brief information about which rooms are in the labyrinth. The labyrinth began its journey across the country in 2021 and has already been to Kyiv, Vinnytsia, Slavutych, Lviv, Rivne, Ivano-Frankivsk, Zhytomyr, Chekasy.

As part of informal education, we offer students an online course on the basics of media literacy on the EdEra platform. The online course is active by appointment: https://study.ed-era.com/uk/courses/course/2118.

During classroom lessons on the formation of media literacy of future preschool education specialists, we offer to use a problem-based approach. Problem-based presentation of knowledge (rather than a traditional monologue) during lectures and partially search and search-based during practical classes. To activate students in the formation of their media literacy, we ask whether they have encountered false information in the media? How to distinguish the true from the false? Do they know how to make fakes? Have they met scammers on social networks? Or do they know such stories of their relatives and friends? We ask them to share and supplement. A problematic question can be asked at the beginning of a new topic and thus motivate students to study it. By asking a problematic question at the end of the lesson, we motivate them to study a new topic in the next lesson. Students like such methods, because they feel like equal participants in the educational process.

We also suggest using BYOD technology ("bring your own device"). At Mykhailo Kotsiubynskyi Vinnytsia State Pedagogical University, since 2020, training has been taking place in a blended format. This decision was made in connection with Covid-19 and then martial law in Ukraine. Both during full-time and distance learning, during lectures and practical classes, we offer students to find certain information using their own devices. This makes learning dynamic, interesting, and motivates students to acquire new knowledge in the field of media education.

IV.   ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

V.   CONCLUSIONS

In the article, the authors attempted to actualize the problem of training future preschool education specialists to form the foundations of children's media literacy. Due to the increasing speed of development of media technologies, negative content in the media environment, fraudulent actions, it is necessary to form children's media literacy from an early age, to be conscious citizens of the digital world. For this, it is necessary to train future specialists in preschool education.

The following approaches and technologies for forming the skills of future preschool education specialists to form the foundations of media literacy of preschool children are identified: a problem-based approach, BYOD technology ("bring your own device"), non-standard forms, in particular, visiting a media literacy maze.

The study does not cover all aspects of the problem under consideration. Further research is needed to form the motivation of preschool education specialists for independent continuous professional development in the field of media literacy and to involve parents in this.

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