

Kolbasko Y.O. Publishing activity and achievements of the research group “Media education and media competence” of Anton Chekhov Taganrog State Pedagogical Institute (Russia) // Collection of articles of the methodological seminar in the Ukraine: Scientific reflection on challenges, practices, and perspectives. Kiev: National Academy of pedagogical sciences of the Ukraine, Institute of social and political psychology, 2013, pp.210-218.

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Publishing activity and achievements of the research group “Media education and media competence” of Anton Chekhov Taganrog State Pedagogical Institute (Russia)

Abstract: The article deals with the publishing activity of the members of the research group “Media education and media competence” in Anton Chekhov Taganrog State Pedagogical Institute (Russia) conditioned by their researches of the wide spectrum of issues in media education literacy. The author analyzes the role and the impact of the publishing activities of the researchers which have been funded by state and international grants, upon the building of the concrete methodological base (as a result of the decades of study). The article emphasizes the achievements of the scientific school, and its head Prof. Alexander Fedorov in particular, that can facilitate the creation and integration of media education courses in curricular of pre-school, secondary school, and higher education institutions.

Key words: media, media education, media competence, media literacy, publishing activity, Alexander Fedorov, research, media studies, media culture, Taganrog State Pedagogical Institute, Russia.

Anton Chekhov Taganrog State Pedagogical Institute (TSPI) originates from the educational institution opened in 1911 which was only relocated in Taganrog in 1955. For over 60 years it has been implementing educational and research activity aimed at the preparation of highly qualified specialists in 12 directions. However the key role is naturally given to pedagogical degrees. Moreover one of the advantages of the Institute is its rich library which fund is constantly growing to the considerable extent due to the educational materials, both print and electronic. The large part of them is

made up of publications by the Institute's faculty printed by the publishing department of TSPI functioning since 2010. Its structural subdivisions are editing and polygraphic laboratories, equipped with the modern technologies that contribute to the raising quality and quantity of publications, and therefore, widen the opportunities of the faculty to participate in international and national round tables and conferences [13].

There are several scholar schools in different directions in the Institute. One of them is "Media education and media competence" founded in 1993 with the support of the Russian Federal Target Program of Russian Ministry of Education and Science.

One of the first achievements of the school's members on the way of the development of media education in Russia one can consider their immediate participation in the official registration of the new specialization – Media Education (N 03.13.30.). That is why it was Taganrog State Pedagogical Institute that the first specialists in the field graduated from in 2007. Later the specialization started to be introduced in other universities, too [14].

The academic school is headed by the Russian scientist, Prof. Dr. Alexander Fedorov, not only known in the context of media education literacy, but as a reputable film studies expert, and one of the most recognized persons in modern media culture (since 2002 the member of the National Academy of Cinema Arts, since 2003 – the President of the Association for Film and Media Education of Russia, etc.).

In this article we are going to try and examine in detail the publishing activities of the research group "Media education and media competence", that for more than 20 years of existence have created the solid scientific methodological basis that has become the fundamental one for further researches in the field.

The “lion’s share” of the scholar school’s pioneering researches of media education literacy in the media space of Russia and other world countries belongs to Alexander Fedorov. One of the professor’s first monographs – “Media education: history, theory and methods” – was published in 2001 and presented the wide and profound panorama of different aspects of media culture, education, basic media elements and their functional peculiarities. The book is also interesting from the point of view of the field researches (results of monitoring, questionnaires) [10-1].

The monograph “Media education in the western countries” (2003) contains a kind of an extension of the study of the history, theory and methods of education on the material of mass media (cinema, press, TV, Internet, etc.) in foreign countries. The author examines media education concepts of prominent world experts, analyzes the results of the integration of media education courses for schoolchildren and students [9-1].

The timely and important monograph “The children’s rights and violence on the screen” [12-1] analyzes a wide spectrum of problems caused by the impact of watching violence in media on children and teens. Not only does the author provide his own conclusions but gives the opinions on the issue of the researchers from other countries as well. The interesting component of the book are the results of the questionnaire of 26 media educators around the world who share their views on media education, ways of integration into the teaching practice, etc. The book also presents the results of the content analysis of Russian TV programs and films, and suggests some ways of resisting negative influence of the screen violence on underage audiences. The publication and the research upon which it was based, was funded by the grant program of John and Catherine MacArthur Foundation.

Due to the grants of Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA), and IREX (The International Research & Exchanges Board) in 2004 Alexander Fedorov published the teaching guide “Media education and literacy” [11-1], aimed at undergraduate and postgraduate students, Ph.D. students and university instructors, that can be considered as a practical implementation of the previous theoretical researches of the author, in particular, the history of media education, modern world tendencies in teaching, etc.

Numerous articles by Prof. Alexander Fedorov and his colleagues are dedicated to different aspects of media education development, media culture and literacy, search for effective ways of integration of the media education with traditional subjects in educational institutions.

The key source of information about the results of the latest researches in media literacy, scientific conferences, etc. since 2005 has been the academic journal “Media Education”. The periodical was launched with the support of the UNESCO bureau in Moscow, Russian Association for Film and Media Education, trans-regional public organization “Information for All” and Anton Chekhov Taganrog State Pedagogical Institute. The chief editor of the journal is Alexander Fedorov. The journal releases 4 issues a year and the number of articles and section topics vary constantly. Thus, the last issue of 2012 only contained 4 sections and 6 articles, one of which by the way, “The analysis of main challenges and tendencies of the development of laic mass media education as compared to theological media education” [8-32] was written by Alexander Fedorov in co-authorship with the Ukrainian colleague Prof. Anna Onkovich.

Thanks to the active facilitation of collaboration of foreign colleagues and professional distribution (for example, the electronic version of the journal is regularly uploaded in the Internet and can be easily and freely

accessed, the contents of the issues has also English translation), the journal is internationally recognized, which is as well proved by the fact of its inclusion into the DOAJ: Directory of Open Access Journals in 2009 [15].

The traditional sections of the journal are “News” and “Bookshelf”, the latter introduces book reviews.

The magazine should not only be noted for its academic and educational functions but also for its communicative and prognostic functions as well. The journal publishes topical theories and practices of the members of “Media education and competence” team. Having read the publications we can draw the conclusion that the problem of media education, and therefore, of media literacy/competence is studied profoundly; different factors of media texts use and appreciation by various participants of the educational process, are examined.

Dr. Elena Muryukina’s research interest is integration of media education into high school (9-11 grades of secondary school) – “Media education lessons for junior and senior classes on the material of film press”, “Model of media education aimed at 9-11 graders”, “Characteristics of levels of the media culture development”). On the other hand, Dr. Anastasia Levitskaya (Novikova) focuses her studies on integration of media education into teaching English as a foreign language, based on her prior researches of media education theory and practices in English speaking countries, the USA in particular (“Media in the English language classroom: a teaching aid or media education?”, “Modern tendencies of the development of media education in the USA”).

It should be noted that the activities of the scholar school “Media education and media competence” are not only supported by state grants but by international academic community as well – researchers have been awarded numerous grants of international foundations. Thus, for example,

Dr. Anastasia Levitskaya received the Fulbright scholarship in 2003-2004. And Dr. Irina Chelysheva was the head of media education projects funded by the Central European University (Budapest 2009-2010) and Russian State Foundation for Humanities. Another grant supported the study of audiovisual literacy of schoolchildren on the material of screen arts (Dr. Natalia Ryzhih).

Alexander Fedorov and other media educators from his team are the leaders and participants of researches funded by the Russian State Foundation for Humanities, the program “Russian Universities”, the President’s program “Support of the leading scientific schools of thought of the Russian Federation”, Federal target program “Research and pedagogical faculty”, another target program “The development of the academic potential of higher education institutions” by the Ministry of Education and Science of Russia.

Such active participation in the academic field of media education undoubtedly endorses up-to-dateness of publications of the team members, their competence in the tendencies and events in the field on the international scale. That is why the researchers have participated and become the winners of the All-Russian contest “The best book on communication studies and education”.

Going back to the publishing activity of the school, one should mention the collection of articles of young scientists, edited by A.Fedorov – “Media education and media competence”: All-Russian academic school for young researchers” (2009).

Of course the activity of “Media education and media competence” team is not limited by the articles publications. There are a lot of monographs and teaching manuals published by TSPI specialists. Besides Alexander Fedorov’s monographs mentioned above, an important role in the development of media education was played by the monographs by Irina

Chelysheva “Methods and technologies of media education in school and university” [5-1], “Media education in children’s upbringing” [3-1], books by Natalia Ryzhih, Elena Muryukina, Anastasia Levitskaya, Victoria Kolesnichenko, and others.

The monograph “Research and educational center “Media education and media literacy: educating future teachers” written by Irina Chelysheva, Elena Muryukina and Natalia Ryzhih will be of the great professional interest for practicing teachers, too [4-1].

Publication of teaching and study guides are worth special attention because they are the result of prolific work, moreover, cooperation of media educators, team members, in different aspects of media education for many years, so they are verified by teaching practices and researches.

The school’s educational legacy as well as the articles is aimed at wide audiences: university teachers in general (teaching guide by Elena Muryukina “Media education and media competence” research and education center: working with undergraduate and graduate students [1-1]), teachers of particular subjects (teaching guide by Anastasia Levitskaya / Novikova “Media education in the English language classroom” [2-1]), study guides for particular media texts (teaching manual of Irina Chelysheva “The development of critical thinking and media competence of the students in the process of audiovisual media texts analysis” [6-1].

The publishing activity of the academic school “Media education and media competence” of Anton Chekhov Taganrog State Pedagogical Institute is closely tied to research activity of the team which can be considered the model of efficient and productive research work.

Due to the numerous fruitful researches of different aspects of the problem of media competence of the youth in modern media space, state and international funds and programs, media educators of the scholar team

“Media education and media competence” succeeded to create the solid basis for further research for young specialists who have already got some knowledge in the field again, thanks to the previous works of such prominent researchers as Alexander Fedorov, Anastasia Levitskaya, Irina Chelysheva, Elena Muryukina, Natalia Ryzhih. Modern academic publishing activity of the given school put Taganrog on the map as the media education capital of Russia.

A great number of articles, research findings and teaching guides of the school “Media education and media competence” presenting results of various scientific quests in the field of media education, are of the high level. They realize information, communicative, prognostic and naturally educational functions, popularizing media education information and promoting its analysis among students and educators.

The recognition of the school’s “Media education and media competence” publications by international academic community allows its members to fully represent their research findings on the international arena, to collaborate with foreign colleagues, for instance – with Ukrainian researchers of media culture and media education. Such activity promotes the opinion on the necessity of media literacy courses integration in schools and universities. While the lack of media literacy and culture undoubtedly can become a problem for a modern person.

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List of the main Russian media education literacy webs:

<http://eduof.ru/mediaeducation/> – Russian Association for Film and Media Education

<http://eduof.ru/medialibrary> - E-Library "Media Education"

<http://eduof.ru/mediacompetence> - E-Encyclopedia "Media Education and Media Culture"

http://eduof.ru/medialibrary/default.asp?ob_no=34437 - Media Education Journal

<http://www.mediagram.ru> – Information Literacy and Media Education

<http://www.evartist.narod.ru/mdo/mo.htm> - Media Education in e-library EvArtist