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Media Education/Literacy: The Analyze of Experts' Opinions

Actuality, Aims and Methodology of the Survey

The Russian Pedagogical Encyclopedia defines media education as the direction in pedagogic, promoting the study of "regularities of mass communications (press, television, radio, cinema, video, etc.). The main goals of media education are: to prepare the new generation for the living in the modern information world, for the perception of different information, to teach a person to understand it, realize the effects of its influence on the psychology, to master means of communication based on the non-verbal forms, with the help of technical means" [3]. Media education today is seen as the process of the personality's development with the help of and on the material of the means of mass communications (media). It is aimed at the development of the culture of the intercourse with media, creative, communicative abilities, critical thinking, perception, interpretation, analysis and evaluation of media texts, teaching different forms of self expression with media technology. Media literacy, acquired in the result of this process, helps a person to actively use the resources of the information field of TV, radio, video, cinema, press, Internet [1, 8].

The important event in the history of the media education movement in Russia is the registration (by the Educational Methodical Unification of the Ministry of Education of the Russia Federation) of a new university specialization "Media Education" (03.13.30) in June 2002. The initiative came from our research group, supported by the grant of Russian Humanities Scientific Fund (grant N 01-06-00027a). In practice it means that for the first time in its history, media education in Russia gained an official status.

Still, in Russia as well as in foreign countries we can witness sort of the confusion of the terms of "media education" and "media literacy". There are quite a few differences in theoretical approaches to media education, to distinguishing of the most important aims, objectives, means of introduction into the teaching process, etc. These are the reasons why we addressed to the leading Russian and foreign media educators asking them to answer the special survey aimed at the clearing up of the following questions:
-which of the well known definitions of media education and media literacy are supported the most among the experts;
-what media education aims and theories seem as the most important;
-how these theories and purposes correspond to the modern socio-cultural context of different countries;
-what way of the integration of the media education into schools and universities, supplementary educational and recreational institutions is seen as the most preferable;
-in what countries at the present time the level of the development of media education is the highest?

We are very grateful to all the Russian and foreign experts in the field of media education/literacy, who sent their answers. In the result we've collected data from 26 media educators from 10 countries:

Baranov, Oleg, Ph.D., Assoc.professor, Tver State Pedagogical Institute, member of Russian Association for Film & Media Education (Russia);

Chelysheva, Irina. Ph.D., Taganrog State Pedagogical Institute, member of Russian Association for Film & Media Education (Russia);

Clarembeaux, Michel, Director of Liege Audiovisual Center (Belgium);

Cornell, Richard, Ed.D., Professor and Coordinator, College of Education, University of Central Florida), former president of International Council for Educational Media (USA);

Gomes, Jose Ignacio, Ph.D., professor, director of Grupo Comunicar, Universida de Huelva (Spain);

Goodman, Steven, Executive Director of Educational Video Center, New York City (USA);

Gura, Valery. Ph.D., professor, Taganrog State Pedagogical), member of Russian Association for Film & Media Education (Russia);

Gutierrez Martin, Alfonso, PhD., University of Valladolid (Spain);

Korochensky, Alexander, Ph.D., professor of Rostov State University), member of Russian Association for Film & Media Education (Russia);

Krucsay, Susanne, Head of department Media Pedagogy/Educational Media/Media Service in the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Culture (Austria);

Lemish, Dafna, Ph.D., professor, Chair, Department of Communication, Tel Aviv University (Israel);

McMahon, Barrie, Curriculum Manager Post-compulsory Education, Department of Education and Training, Western Australia;

Monastyrsky, Valery, Ph.D., professor, vice-director of Institute of Social Science, Tambov State Pedagogical University), member of Russian Association for Film & Media Education (Russia);

Novikova, Anastassia, Ph.D., member of Russian Association for Film & Media Education (Russia);

Penzin, Stal, Ph.D., assoc.professor, Voronezh State University, member of Russian Association for Film & Media Education (Russia);

Pungente, John, president of CAMEO (Canadian Association of Media Education Organisations), director of Jesuit Communication Project, Toronto (Canada);

Rother, Irving/Lee, Ph.D, president of Association for Media Education in Quebec (AMEQ); Board member Canadian Association for Media Education Organisations (Canada);

Ryzich, Natalia, media educator, Taganrog State Pedagogical Institute, member of Russian Association for Film & Media Education (Russia);

Shak, Tatiana, Ph.D., assoc. professor, Krasnodar State University of Culture & Arts, Head of the Center of Musical & Information Technologies, member of Russian Association for Film & Media Education (Russia);

Suess, Daniel, Ph.D., professor, University of Zurich and Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich (Switzerland);

Torres, Miguel Reyes, Ph.D., professor, director of CIME - Media Education Investigation Center, coordinator Master Degree in media education, University Playa Ancha (Chili);

Tyner, Kathleen, Lead Researcher, Hi-Beam Consulting (San Francisco), Program Director of the Youth Media Initiative of the National Alliance of Media Arts and Culture (USA);

Usenko, Leonid, Ph.D, professor of Rostov State Pedagogical University, member of Russian Association for Film & Media Education (Russia).

Wei, Bu, Ph.D., professor of Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (China);

Worsnop, Chistopher, one of the North American leader in media education (Canada);

Yakushina, Ekaterina, Ph.D., Russian Academy of Education, member of Russian Association for Film & Media Education (Russia).

The questionnaire combined the questions of the open and closed types. The results show that experts answered the open type questions less willingly than those that required choice among variants, that just corresponds to the general tendency of sociological surveys. Respondents tend to economize their time and as a rule seldom give long answers.

Media education, media literacy, media studies

So, the first point of our questionnaire offered to the experts three variants of the definitions of media education (published during the past years by the authoritative editions), that they were supposed agree or disagree with. As a result it turned out that the majority of experts (96,15%) supported the first definition (Chart 1). Evidently, this definition developed by the UNESCO conference seemed to the experts as the most convincing and complete.

Chart 1. The experts' attitude to variants of definitions of media education

N	Definitions of **Media Education:**	Numbers of experts, who basically agree with the given definition:	Numbers of experts, who basically disagree with the given definition:

1	"**Media Education** -deals with all communication media and includes the printed word and graphics, the sound, the still as well as the moving image, delivered on any kind of technology; -enables people to gain understanding of the communication media used in their society and the way they operate and to acquire skills using these media to communicate with others; -ensure that people learn how to * analyse, critically reflect upon and create media texts; * identify the sources of media texts, their political, social, commercial and/or cultural interests, and their contexts; * interpret the messages and values offered by the media; * select appropriate media for communicating their own messages or stories and for reaching their intended audience; * gain or demand access to media for both reception and production. Media education is part of basic entitlement of every citizen, in every country in the world, to freedom of expression and the right to information and is instrumental in building and sustaining democracy" [Recommendations Addressed to the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization UNESCO. In: Education for the Media and the Digital Age. Vienna: UNESCO, 1999, p.273-274. Reprint in: Outlooks on Children and Media. Goteborg: UNESCO & NORDICOM, 2001, p. 152].	25 (96,15%)	1 (3,85%)
2	"Media teachers today use the term 'media education', 'media study' and 'media literacy' almost interchangeably. **My personal preference is to use the term 'media education'** as a broad description of all that takes place in media-oriented classroom. … "Media literacy" is the outcome of work in either media education or media study. The more you learn about or through the media, the more media literacy you have: media literacy is the skills of experiencing, interpreting/analyzing and making media products" [Worsnop, C. Screening Images: Ideas for Media Education (1999). Mississauga, Ontario: Wright Communications, p.x).	17 (65,38%)	7 (26,92%)
3	**"Media education"** is teaching *about* media, as distinguished from teaching *with* media. Ordinarily, media education emphazies the acquisition both of cognitive knowledge about how media are produced and distributed and of analytic skills for interpreting and valuing media content. In contrast, 'media studies' ordinarily emphasize hands-on experiences with media production" *[International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences. Vol. 14 / Eds.N.J.Smelser & P.B.Baltes. Oxford, 2001, p.9494].*	12 (46,15%)	11(42,31%)

The number of experts, who suggested another definition turned out minimal (2 respondents). However, T.Shak wrote that it's a "process of media study and study with the help of media, the result of which is the ability to 1) analyze, critically comprehend and create media texts; 2)distinguish the sources of media texts, their political, social, commercial and /or cultural interest, their context; 3) interpret media texts and values spread by media; 4) choose the correspondent media for the creation and dissemination of one's own media texts and find the target audience; 5) get the opportunity for the free access to media both for perception and for production".

In his turn, A.Guterrez Martin suggests his definition of multimedia education: "I have referred to multimedia education as that which, making use of prevailing technologies of the day, allows students to achieve those skills, knowledge and attitudes needed to : communicate (interpret and produce messages) utilizing different languages and media; develop personal autonomy and a critical spirit, which gives them the ability to… form a just and multicultural society in which to live side by side with the technological innovations of the day" [2,12].

In our opinion, the definitions by A.Guterrez Martin and T.Shak do not contradict the UNESCO definition, giving some variations and amplifications.

The second point of our questionnaire offered three variants of the definitions of media literacy to choose from or disagree (Chart 2).

Chart 2. The experts' attitude to variants of definitions of media literacy

N	Definitions of **Media Literacy:**	Numbers of experts, who basically agree with the given definition:	Numbers of experts, who basically disagree with the given definition:
1	"**Media literacy** proponents contend that the concept an active, not passive user: The media-literate person is capable recipient and creator of content, understanding sociopolitical context, and using codes and representational systems effectively to live responsibly in society and the world at large" *[International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences. Vol. 14 / Eds.N.J.Smelser & P.B.Baltes. Oxford, 2001, p.9494].*	17(65,38%)	6(23,08%)
2	"**Media literacy**, the movement to expand notions of literacy to include the powerful post-print media that dominate our informational landscape, helps people understand, produce, and negotiate meanings in a culture made up of powerful images, words, and sounds. A media-literate person – everyone should have the opportunity to become one – can decode, evaluate, analyze, and produce both print and electronic media" *[Aufderheide, P., Firestone, C. Media Literacy: A Report of the National Leadership Conference on Media Literacy. Queenstown, MD: The Aspen Institute, 1993, p.1.].*	16 (61,54%)	6(23,08%)
3	"Definition for **media literacy:** *the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and communicate messages in a variety of forms*" *[Kubey, R. Media Education: Portraits of an Evolving Field. In: Kubey, R. (Ed.) Media Literacy in the Information Age. – New Brunswick & London: Transaction Publishers, 1997, p. 2].*	12(46,15%)	9(34,61%)

As we can see, there is a rather even distribution of voices between the three definitions of media literacy. Some experts proposed other definitions:

-"media literacy as the result of media education is the ability to adequately percept, interpret, evaluate and create media texts" (V.Monastyrsky);

-"Multimedia literacy. More immediate objectives of multimedia literacy include: to provide knowledge of the languages that shape interactive multimedia documents and the way they are constructed; to provide knowledge and use of the most prevalent devices and techniques for processing information; to provide knowledge and facilitate the assessment of the social and cultural implications of new multimedia technologies; to foster an attitude of critical media reception and responsible behavior in the public sphere" (A.Gutierrez Martin).

 "To be media literate is to have an informed and critical understanding of the nature, techniques and impact of the mass media as well as the ability to create media products" (J.Pungente).

As we see, the boundary between the media education and media literacy sometimes is rather blur both in the definitions included into the chart and in the expanded answers of the experts. Since these terms are often substituted with each other, by our third question we tried to find out if the experts see the difference in such commonly used notions as "media education", "media literacy" and "media studies"?

As the result it turned out that just 2 respondents (B.McMahon, B.Wei) do not differentiate these terms, while the rest of them think that:

-a matter of context…depends on how the term is used and toward what purposes (R.Cornell);

-Media education is the process of teaching about print, electronic and digital media. Although 'media studies' has been used to distinguish itself from 'media education', the difference seems doctrinaire, artificial and inconsequential to the understanding of media teaching and learning. Media literacy implies the complex outcome of 'literacy'. It is an imprecise and confusing term and does little to define the field. I prefer 'media education' (K.Tyner);

-'media education' is a cross-curricular/trans-curricular approach to be taken up in each subject; 'media literacy' refers to an overall ability/competence; 'media studies' is a discipline in its own right whose topic are media and all the implications connected to them (S.Krucsay);

-'media education' is basically an educational approach to media it is more comprehensive, 'media literacy' is basically alphabetization to visual codes. 'Media studies' are linked with the knowledge of mass media for technical, political, social, or educational or different purposes (M.Reyes Torres);

-Media education includes media studies and media literacy (N.Ryzhih, I.Chelysheva, J.I.Gomez);

-Media literacy is the result of the process of media education, media literacy is the intended outcome of media education" (S.Penzin, V.Gura, A.Korochenskyi, V.Monastyrsky, T.Shak, Ch.Worsnop, J.Pungente, L.Rother, D.Suess);

-Media studies is the main way to practical mastering of media facilities (V.Monastyrsky);

-'media studies' are less normative than 'media education', it can be a more descriptive approach to media (D.Suess);

-'media studies' is focussed on the acquisition of cognitive knowledge about media. Media education is focussed on the development of attitudes and critical skills about media. Media Literacy includes the basics of Media Studies and Media Education to provide the student with the ability to participate freely in the society (A.Gutierrez Martin);

-'media literacy' and 'media studies' often implies the critical analysis of media but not the production, whereas 'media education' usually embraces both analysis and production (S.Goodman).

There are both the common stands and certain disagreement, blending of the essence of the terms media education, media literacy and media studies in the answers of the experts. In this sense the most expanded answer to the problem was given by the Canadian media educator I.Rother: "Over the last decade the terms Media Education, Media Studies and Media Literacy have been used almost interchangeably by media educators in North America, Britain and Australia. The following distinctions have been adapted from Silverblatt (1995); Masterman (1985); Worsnop (1994); Buckingham (1993); Lusted (1991); Moore (1991); Media Education in Britain: An Outline (1989):

Media Education includes:

-using media across the curriculum application;

-a topic within another subject;

-develops critical understanding of media through analytical and practical work

-includes teaching about the forms, conventions and technologies;

-includes teaching about media institutions, and their social, political and cultural roles;

-places emphasis upon student's experience of the media and their relevance to their own lives;

-themes and project work;

-borrows from audio-visual literacy and English Language/Arts North American influence.

Media Studies includes:

-a cross-media application;

-a theoretical application of the media;

-a conceptual framework;

-incorporates analysis of a message delivered by the media and the techniques used to create that message;

-borrows from communication, film and cultural studies;

-British, Australian and European influence.

Media Literacy builds on the following outcomes of Media Education and media studies:

-an awareness of the impact of media on the individual and society;

-an understanding of the process of mass communication;

-the ability to analyse and discuss media messages;

-an awareness of media context as a text that provides recognition of culture;

-production and analysis skills;

-traditional and non-traditional literacy skills;

-an enriched enjoyment, understanding and appreciation of media content.

Media Literacy: Teaching Through/About Media.   There has also been confusion about teaching through media and teaching about media. Duncan (1993) states that teaching through the media, while concerned with the language of media, primarily focuses on using media as a vehicle to   initiate discussion or as a motivator for Language Arts classes. In other words, in teaching through the media, teachers use the media as a delivery system for subject content. No attempt to examine the delivery system itself is made.

In teaching about the media, the delivery system, i.e. the medium and the message, are examined. Teaching about the media stems from the notion that media shape the world in which we live and therefore it is becoming increasingly important for students to understand the infrastructures of   society. Media Education explores the media within a sociopolitical framework through analysis and production. This includes preparing students to understand the production and dissemination of information, the growth of media industry, the development of commercially based media, the role of advertising, and audience negotiation of print and non-print text"(I.Rother).

We share the opinion of Ch.Worsnop, V.Gura, V.Monastyrsky, A.Korochensky, J.Pungente, S.Penzin, I.Rother, D.Suess, T.Shak and others who consider that media literacy is the intended outcome of media education. However, we also pay attention to the opinion of D.Lemish who says that "originally there was a difference, with media education being more a wider concept and media literacy perceived as being more a specific translation of critical analysis of media. Media studies was more an academic term for theoretical studies. I think today it is almost impossible and unnecessary to separate between them. Therefore in my mind today they are interchangeable, and it is not beneficial to try to theoretically make a distinction. This is also the reason why I accepted all of the above definitions of media education and media literacy because I think they are either complementary or saying the same thing in different ways. It does not seem to me to be critical to agree on a very specific definition of such a wide field" (D.Lemish).

The Main Media Educational Purposes

Our next question dealt with the rating of the main media educational purposes. Undoubtedly, the wording of the question itself made it somewhat vulnerable. For example, one of the leading British media educators Cary Bazalgette in her letter concerning our survey expressed her doubts in the rightfulness of the attempt to single out the most important aim of media education: "But surely different priorities apply in different contexts? Designing an examination course for 16-18 year olds with a strong practical element in an 'arts' context to be taught be specialised teachers, will be quite different from designing a media education module for non-specialist teachers to use with 7-11 year olds in the context of traditional literacy teaching (both of these are real examples, from amongst many others, in the UK). In other words, what matters in media (or indeed any other sort) education is not the theory and the endless comparison of different policy documents, but the practical realities of developing accessible and teachable frameworks and resources for real learners and real teachers in real classrooms subject to real legislation and (probably) unreal political priorities. What media education theorists like to convince each other that they are doing is a lot less interesting than what - if anything - anyone actually learns" (C.Bazalgette).

Certainly, media educational goals can vary depending on the specific theme and objectives of a lesson, age of the students, theoretical basis, etc. However life shows that one way or another, many media educators can rather distinctly choose the most important aims for them. We offered them to give each of the 11 goals in the chart below its place (with 1 - being the most important, 11 - the least important). Then each of the number was given the corresponding amount of points: 11 points for each first place, 10 points – for each second, and so on. The calculation of the average number of points let us define the final "score". The results are presented in the Chart 3.

Chart 3. The experts' attitude to the main purposes of media education/media literacy

N	The main purposes of media education/media literacy:	Average of the points given by experts for this purpose:
1	to develop person's critical thinking/autonomy	241(84,27%)
2	to develop an appreciation, perception and understanding & analysis of media texts	197(68,88%)
3	to prepare people for the life in the democratic society	177(61,89%)
4	to develop an awareness of social, cultural, political and economic implications of media texts (as constructions of media agencies)	176(61,54%)
5	to decode media texts/messages	170(59,44%)
6	to develop person's communicative abilities	164(57,34%)
7	to develop an appreciation and aesthetic perception, understanding of media texts, estimation of aesthetical quality of media texts	157(54,90%)
8	to teach a person to express him/herself with the help of media	154(53,85%)
9	to teach a person to identify, interpret, and experience a variety of techniques used to create media products/texts	143(50,00%)
10	to learn about the theory of media and media culture	137 (47,90%)
11	to learn about the history of media and media culture	108(37,76%)

The analysis of the data of the Chart 3 shows that media education experts consider all the above mentioned aims important, but mostly distinguishing the development of critical thinking/critical autonomy (84,27%), the development of appreciation, perception and understanding & analysis of media texts (68,88%) and the preparation of a student for living in the democratic society(61,89%). The outsiders of the rating became such goals as to learn about the theory and history of media and media culture (from 37,76% to 47,90%).

Just the two experts expressed the wish to add to the list of media educational goals. Thus, the Russian media educator A.Korochenskyi thinks that another main purpose is the development of creative skills of students (with the development of critical thinking and critical autonomy) and the American R.Cornell adds to the list the goal "to prepare media practitioners for a career in our field".

It should be noted that the foreign experts on the whole gave a higher rating for the goal of preparing students for the life in the democratic society, while their Russian colleagues paid more attention to the goal of developing skills of perception (including the aesthetics), evaluation, understanding of media texts. Besides, experts from all the countries placed the aim of the development of critical thinking and critical autonomy in the first place.

Comparing our results with the results of the similar survey, conducted by A.Sharikov in 1990 (23 experts took part in it) [4, 50-51], we encounter the coincidence of the opinions concerning the importance of developing critical thinking abilities. But the high rating of the aim of the communicative abilities' development, shown by the survey in 1990, didn't repeat itself in our case.

The main theories of media education

The next question concerns what media education theories are considered most important by the experts. The results are present in Chart 4.

Chart 4. The experts' attitude to the main theories of media education/media literacy

N	The main theories of media education/media literacy	The number of the experts, preferring to base on the given theory:
1	Critical Thinking/Critical Autonomy/Critical Democratic Approach	22(84,61%)
2	Cultural Studies Approach	18(69,23%)
3	Sociocultural Approach	17(65,38%)
4	Semiotic Approach	15(57,69%)
5	Practical/Hands-On Production Approach	13(50,00%)

6	Aesthetical/Media as Popular Arts Approach	12(46,15%)
7	Ideological Approach	10(38,46%)
8	Uses an Gratifications Approach	8(30,77%)
9	Inoculatory/Protectionist/Hypodermic Needle/Civil Defense Approach	4(15,38%)

Besides the theories given in the chart, some experts added other approaches that could be the basis for the media educational process: ethical, religious (S.Penzin), instructional systems design (R.Cornell).

The overwhelming majority (84,61%) singled out the approach of critical thinking as the leading one (that totally correspond to the leadership of the analogous aim in the previous question). Then quite evenly follow the cultural studies (69,23%), sociocultural (65,39%) and semiotic (57,69%) approaches. Predictably, the least popular among the experts (15,38%) is the protectionist approach (that is concentrating on the protection of the audience from the harmful influence of media). Besides, foreign experts support the practical approach, uses as gratifications approach and ideological theory, while the Russian-give preference to the aesthetical approach. The aesthetical orientation of the Russian media education has a long time tradition, so the results just confirmed a well-known fact. In our opinion, the non–popularity of the ideological approach among the Russian experts is quite comprehensible too: Russian pedagogic, having experienced the strict ideological pressing, today is very negative about the ideology in the educational process, although, ideology still (in an obvious or concealed manner) remains the influential power in any society, and therefore cannot but be reflected in any educational processes.

Sociocultural situation

The question about the degree and the way of the influence of the social and cultural situation in the country of their residence on the aims and approaches of media education, was answered by the few experts. Ideally, we expected a developed answer, which of course requires more time and effort to give. So many experts confined themselves to general remarks, that did not clarify the correlation of the social and cultural situation and the media education goals and approaches (This is example of the typical answer: "Both social and cultural influences are inextricably linked to media education – they cannot (or should not) be studied in isolation. High correlation between media education and sociology and culture, for sure!").

Among the obtained answers the following factors of the social and cultural impact on the media education were mentioned:

-"Russia is on the threshold of the transition to the information society, that is why people must be prepared to actively participate in it" (V.Gura);

-"The spontaneous introduction to the media is fraught with the deformations in the sociocultural development of a personality (deformations of the values' hierarchy in the cultural sphere, decrease of the cultural needs of the people, scarcity of the spiritual life, etc.) (V.Monastyrsky);

-"Commercialism of mass media, the strong State and corporative control of main media resources, the lack of public broadcasting, the lack of democratic civil pressures to mass media – it provokes (in Russia) the interest to Civil Defense Approach, Critical Thinking/Critical Autonomy/Critical Democratic Approach" (A.Korochensky).

-"Considering the abundance of foreign media in Russia and the globalisation of the teenage culture teachers can use the media education for the study of a native and a foreign culture, comparison, and appreciation"(A.Novikova);

"the authority of scientific knowledge is reduced, but we have the very much remembered information from mass-media (including advertising & Internet). Therefore on the first places I have put those moments which are connected to perception and a critical estimation of the information" (E.Yakushina);

-"sociocultural situation in Russia is connected to a muddy stream commercial media texts (first of all – American), that considerably complicates process of a media education" (L.Usenko);

-"In Switzerland we have a high degree of prosperity. Private homes, schools and firms are highly equipped with media. Therefore young people have to become media literate, to be able to

participate in a postmodern media society and as citizens in a direct democracy. This democracy does only work if the citizens are able to evaluate media information appropriately and if they know where to find reliable knowledge. This is influenced by the scientific approaches which are dominant in our universities. Media Education as I understand it, is part of a social science. Media and communication research works with surveys and qualitative studies on media exposure, reception and on media effects. Media education is based on a democratic parenting style and tries to take into account the needs and educational tasks of young people in our pluralistic society" (D.Suess);

-"In the United States, content analysis takes precedent over the analysis of historical, economic, social and cultural contexts that shape the meaning of texts. Increasingly, media educators are expanding their analysis of media content to include these contexts. Because of the high integration and access to digital technology, as well as the American penchant for individualism, hands-on media production is a natural entry point for media education in the United States. In addition, cultural and social values related to equity and fairness make the issue of representation in media a priority for many media educators. Conversely, geographic pockets of political conservatism as well as ideological extremism of both ends of the political spectrum, as well as the historical significance and tenacity of Puritanical social trends also favor widespread association of media education with innoculatory approaches to media" (K.Tyner);

-"Basically, Chinese culture doesn't encourage person's critical thinking, especially in children's education. But in the information society, the critical thinking is very significant ability for every person. Actually, these theories have been not adopted into media education in China. Moreover, there is not formal media education in schools in China. So it is difficult to estimate social and cultural influence" (B.Wei).

As we can see, some media education specialists tried to bind the approaches and aims of media education with the social and cultural context of their countries, find grounds for t he priorities. However in order to get a more complete and deep picture of this problem, no doubt, a long and substantial research, based on the comparative analysis, is necessary.

The Main Ways of the Introduction of Media Education

Further on the experts were asked to mark which way of the introduction of media education seemed more preferable – autonomous (for example, special courses, optional classes), integrated (into the traditional required school and university courses) or the synthetic (synthesis of the autonomous and integrated ways) (Chart 5).

Chart 5. The experts' attitude to the main media education/media literacy's introduction

N	The kinds of main media education/literacy's introduction (in schools, universities, culture & entertainment centers, etc.):	*The number of the experts, preferring this kind of introduction:*
1	-synthetic way (autonomous + integrated ways);	16 (61,54%)
2	-integrated way (as part of ordinary education in the schools & universities);	8(30,77%)
3	-separate, autonomous way (as special courses, for examples);	2(7,69%)

As a result it turned out that the majority of experts (61,54%) consider the synthetic as the most acceptable way, combining the integration of media education into the obligatory courses with the autonomous special courses, electives, or clubs. For example, A.Korochenskyi is an active supporter of "synthetic, different forms (the part of formal education + special courses + media criticism as special field of journalism and civil activities). The education, including media education, must be a permanent part of the socialization and the life of a modern man in the condition of changing "information society" - from childhood to the old age" (A.Korochensky).

About twice as less are the advocates of just the integrated approach and completely little few (7,69%) supports an autonomous way only.

Media Education Today: The Leading Countries

In the upshot of the survey experts were asked to name the countries, where in their opinion the media education was developed on the highest level (Chart 6).

Chart 6. The list of the countries in which, in opinion of experts, the media education is on the highest level of development

N	The name of the country:	Number of experts in whose opinion the development of a media education in the given country is today at the highest level:
1	Canada	17(65,38%)
2	UK	16(61,54%)
3	Australia	11(42,31%)
4	France	7(26,92%)
5	USA	6(23,07%)
6	Russia	5(19,23%)

The answers did not show unexpected results. Canada, Great Britain, Australia, France and the USA are recognized leaders in media education. The rest of the voices divided (11, 54% for each); themselves more or less equally between some Western Europe countries (Denmark, Finland, Germany, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland) and Japan; Mexico, Taiwan & South Africa (7,69% for each), Argentina, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Chile, Cuba, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, New Zealand, Spain, Venezuela (3,85% for each).

In fact, achievements of Canada and Australia, where media education gained an official status at every secondary school, are known to media educators all over the world. The popularity of theoretical and practical ideas of the leading British, French and American media education professionals is also great. Media education in Scandinavia have traditionally strong positions. As for the Eastern European countries, the media education experience of Russia and Hungary is better known, while media educators from other countries know very little (partly because of the language barrier) about media education in Poland, Romania, the Czech Republic.

For many decades Russian media education enthusiasts were isolated from the world process of media education. Positive change in this direction began just 10-15 years ago. That is why we would like to hope that the results of our small research to some extent will help Russian media education practitioners and researchers think about the problems of the comparative analysis of media educational approaches in different countries.

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