Prof. Dr. Alexander Fedorov

Media Education Conception: Opinion from Russia

Abstract

What media education initiatives do exist in Russia? Who is involved in the implementation of these initiatives? What are the goals of these educational initiatives? What is the audience of media education in Russia? What about media education's curriculum spaces and teacher education and training? How many professional associations & agencies for media education do exist in Russia? What do Russian teachers think about media education in schools? These are the key questions of this article.

Prof. Dr. Alexander Fedorov

Media Education Conception: Opinion from Russia*

1. Introduction. Just like the education on the whole, media education in Russia resided under harsh ideological pressure for many years. Access to media information (press, television, films, etc.) was denied by censorship. However media education in Russia has existed for about 80 years.

Media education can be distinctly divided into 4 main directions:

- media education of future media professionals;

- media education of future media educators or school & university teachers (through special courses at universities, vocational training, web-sites, etc.);

- media education as a part of traditional education of pupils and students in primary schools, high schools, colleges, universities (through educational curricula), etc.;

– media education of all people categories in the culture centers, entertainment centers, clubs and others 'additional' institutions, including distance media education (for example with TV, DVD/CDROMs and Internet);

Media education in Russia is not compulsory for all schools & universities (except for some secondary schools on an experimental basis and media orientated universities and faculties). Media education can be integrated into informatics (Internet & computer application lessons), aesthetic (literature, art, music, artistic culture, aesthetics), linguistic (Russian and foreign languages), historical &

philosophical (history, philosophy, law) and some other courses. Another variant: optional media education courses.

Russia has not got the compulsory General Curriculum in the field of media education. Some Russian teachers consider the basis of media training to be practical, hands-on studies of media materials, some teachers prefer theory to practice; some focus on the aesthetic value of media text.

The Status of Media Education is not strong in modern Russia. General National Curriculum for Media Education does not exist yet. As media education is not an obligatory separate course, pupils do not take final examinations in it. School inspectors basically seldom talk with Russian teachers about media teaching (because for the most part they do not know what media education is about). But some school principals encourage the application of media education.

Media education is a cross-curricular subject integrated in traditional subject (Languages, History, Arts, etc.). But media education is also an independent option for specific lessons in some Russian schools & universities. Russian teachers prefer audiovisual media to print media, but only less part of Russian teachers can use the Internet. Many Russian secondary schools have a special "computer classes", but part of these personal computers don't have Internet access.

Many Russian teachers think that media literacy is a traditional education with the help of technical media resources. Media language is seldom a subject of school lessons. Russian teachers comment on the difference between traditional teaching and media teaching in this way: "Media teaching is effective for the development of personality" (20%); "Media teaching is an effective means of communication & information" (10%); "Media teaching is a more effective means of education" (20%); "Media teaching is a more informative means of education" (30%); "Media teaching is effective for development of aesthetic perception" (10%). Russian teachers see the long-term media education aims for their pupils in the development of pupils' personality, critical & aesthetical point of view ("I want to develop pupils' critical thinking", "The pupil must distinguish between the true & false information", "The pupil must learn to use Internet ", "I want to develop pupils' personality, including aesthetic aspects", "I want my pupils to become more media literate").

Many Russian educational web-sites & CD-ROMs were created since the begin of 90s. But educational CD-ROMs don't have a real big official market because of the abundance of media pirates. The number of Russian educational web-sites is very impressive now (about 1,000).

These are the sites for all kinds of problems of education & researches, special web-sites about distance education, the methodical web-sites for Russian teachers of different disciplines, the internet magazines & journals about media education. Of course, Russian teachers can use all these web-sites and journals for educational purposes.

2.Something about Russian Media Education Associations

The history of Russian Association for Film & Media Education goes back to the Russian Association for Film Education. The first attempts to instruct in

media education appeared in the 1920's but were stopped by Stalin's repressions in 1934. And a new history of Russian Association for Film Education began in the 1960s. The end of the 1950s - the beginning of the 1960s was the time of the revival of media education in primary & secondary schools, universities, children centers (Moscow, Petersburg, Voronezh, Samara, Kurgan, Tver, Rostov, Taganrog, Novosibirsk, Ekaterinburg, etc.), the revival of media education seminars & conferences.

The first Russian Council for Film Education in Schools & Universities was created as the section of the Russian Union of Filmmakers (Moscow) in 1967. This Council was transformed into Russian Association for Film & Media Education in 1988. The number of members of Russian Association for Film & Media Education is about 300: primary & secondary level schoolteachers, high school, university, college, lyceum teachers & professors, leaders of film-clubs, etc. Russian Association for Film & Media Education includes also members of the Laboratories of Screen Arts and Media Education (Russian Academy of Education, Moscow).

Russian Association for Film & Media Education has not got the financial support of the State. But this Association initiated the number of successful projects (International media education conferences in Tashkent (1990), Moscow (1992) and Taganrog (2001), Russian-British Media Education seminar (1992, 1995), the special courses for media teachers, Internet web-sites, etc.

The basic directions of Association are:
- Media Literacy Practice in School & Universities;
- Media Education Projects & Presentations;
- Media Education School & University Programs,
- Teacher Training Programs; Media Education Conference & Seminars;
- Media Education Publications;
- Media Education Researches;
- Media Education Webs,
- Media Education Festivals, etc.

3. Teacher education and training (pre-service and in-service)

Pre-service teachers' media education has existed in Russia (Pedagogical Universities in Kurgan, Tver, Voronezh, Rostov, etc.) since the 1960's. For example, a course in media education has been offered in the Taganrog State Pedagogical Institute since 1981 (and since 2002 as official Media Education specialization – 03.13.30). Its students are trained to teach media education classes in schools. To fulfill diploma requirements some of them write reviews and assays on themes of media literacy. Some special media education courses (or short seminars) exist also for in-service Russian school teachers (Moscow, Kurgan and so on). Reality bites: only some Russian teachers want to use elements of media education in their lessons.

4. Some theoretical conceptions

I can generalize Russian models of media education into the following types:

1) educationally-informational models (the studies of the theory and history of media & media language);

2) ethical and philosophy models (study of moral, philosophical problems on the media material);

3) developing models (social & cultural development of a creative person in aspects of perception, critical thinking, analysis, imagination, visual memory, interpretations, etc.);

4) practical models (Internet & computer training, media practical use training, etc.) (Penzin, 1987; Sharikov, 1990; Usov, 1993, Spitchkin, 1999; Zaznobina, 1999; Fedorov, 2001; 2005).

I can distinguish also some of the Russian media education principles:

- development of the personality (the development of media perception, aesthetic consciousness, of creative capabilities, of individual critical thinking, analysis, etc.) in the process of study;

- the connection of theory with practice; transition from training to self-education; connection of training with life;

- consideration of individual peculiarities of students.

The main functions of media education are the following: tutorial, adaptational, developing and controlling.

The tutorial function presupposes the understanding of the theories and laws, the adequate perception and critical analysis of a media work, capability to apply this knowledge in other situations, logical capability.

Adaptational function manifests in initial stage of communication with media.

The developing function implies the development of creative, analytical and other capacities of personality.

Task controlling functions - the providing conditions for the analysis of media works (Penzin, 1987; Sharikov, 1990; Spitchkin, 1999; Usov, 1993, Fedorov, 2001, 2005, etc.).

Here are the main stages of my Media Education Model (Fedorov, 2001; 2005):

1) Verification module (the determination of the levels of students' media development and level of media perception);

2) Module of practical creation & perception (mastering creative abilities on the media material and the formation of the media perception of the structure of media texts (including Internet sites);

3) Module of analysis (the development of abilities of critical analysis in the sphere of media);

4) Module of media history (acquaintance with main events in the media culture history, with the contemporary social & cultural situation);

This model includes the cycle of creative practical exercises in the field of media:

1)writing of verbal texts (plans, scenarios, articles, including texts for Internet sites);

2) practical creation of audiovisual media texts (including Internet pictures and photos);

3) "post-production works" (Fedorov, 2001; 2005).

Classification of Levels of Media Literacy/Media competence

(by Prof. Dr. Alexander Fedorov)

Table 1. Media Literacy/Competence Levels' Classification

№	Media Literacy/Competence Indicators:	Description of Media Literacy/Competence Indicators
1	Motivation	Motives to contact media flow: genre- or subject-based, emotional, epistemological, hedonistic, psychological, ethical, intellectual, esthetic, therapeutic, etc.
2	Contact (Communication)	Frequency of contact/communication with media flow
3	Content	Knowledge of media terminology, theory, and history
4	Perception	Ability to perceive media flow (including media texts)
5	Interpretation/Appraisal	Ability to analyze critically the functioning of media flows and media in society and media texts of various genres and types, based on perception and critical thinking development levels
6	Activity	Ability to select media and to create/distribute one's own information; self-training information skills
7	Creativity	Creative approach to different aspects of media activity (perceptive, play, artistic, research, etc.)

Detailed descriptions of the audience's media literacy development levels for each indicator (based on the above classification) are given in Tables 2-8.

Table 2. Motivation Indicator Development Levels

№	Motivation Indicator Development Levels:	Description of Motivation Indicator Development Levels:
1	High	A wide range of genre- or subject-based, emotional, epistemological, hedonistic, psychological, creative, ethical, intellectual, and esthetic motives to contact media flows, including: - media text genre and subject diversity; - new information; - recreation, compensation, and entertainment (moderate); - identification and empathy; - confirmation of one's own competence in different spheres of life, including information; - search of materials for learning, scientific, and research purposes - esthetic impressions; - philosophic/intellectual, - ethical or esthetic dispute/dialogue with media message authors and critique of their views;

№		Description
		- learning to create one's own media texts.
2	Medium	A range of genre- or subject-based, emotional, epistemological, hedonistic, psychological, ethical, and esthetic motives to contact media flows, including: - information and media text genre and subject diversity; - thrill; - recreation and entertainment; - identification and empathy; - new information; - learning ethical lessons from media texts; - compensation; - psychological "therapy"; - esthetic impressions; - weakly expressed or absent intellectual and creative motives to contact media flows.
3	Low	A narrow range of genre- or subject-based, emotional, hedonistic, ethical, and psychological motives to contact media flows, including: - entertainment information and media texts only; - thrill; - recreation and entertainment; - compensation; - psychological "therapy"; - absent esthetic, intellectual, and creative motives to contact media flows.

Of course, the above motives largely depend on such factors as the environment (micro and macro), communication conditions, heredity/genetic code, education/upbringing, age, gender, etc.

Table 3. Contact Indicator Development Levels

№	*Contact Indicator Development Levels:*	*Description of Contact Indicator Development Levels:*
1	High	Everyday contacts with various types of media and media texts
2	Medium	Contacts with various types of media and media texts a few times a week
3	Low	Contacts with various types of media and media texts a few times a month only.

This indicator is ambivalent. On the one hand, the audience's high level of contacts with various media and media texts does not automatically mean the high level of media literacy in general (one may watch TV, videos or DVDs for hours every day but be still unable to analyze media texts). On the other hand, low-frequency contacts may mean not only the individual's introvert character but also his high-level selectivity and reluctance to consume bad-quality (in his opinion) information.

Table 4. Content Indicator Development Levels

№	Content Indicator Development Levels:	Description of Content Indicator Development Levels:
1	High	Knowledge of most of the basic terms, theories, and history of mass communication and media art culture, clear understanding of mass communication processes and media effects in the social and cultural context
2	Medium	Knowledge of some basic terms, theories and facts of history of mass communication processes, media art culture and media effects
3	Low	Lack of knowledge (or minimum knowledge) of basic terms, theories and facts of history of mass communication processes, media art culture and media effects.

Table 5. Perception Indicator Development Levels

№	Perception Indicator Development Levels:	Description of Perception Indicator Development Levels:
1	High: "comprehensive identification" (with the author of media text)	Identification with the author of media text with basic components of primary and secondary identification preserved
2	Medium: "secondary identification" (with a character (actor) of media text)	Identification with a character (actor) of an information message or media text, i.e., the ability to empathize with a character of media text, to understand his/her mentality, motives, and perception of certain elements of media text (details, etc.)
3	Low: "primary identification" (naïve perception of media text)	Emotional and psychological connection with the environment and story line (sequence of events) of media text, i.e., the ability to perceive the sequence of events of a media text and naïve identification of reality with the content of any text; assimilation of the message environment.

When analyzing perception indicator development levels, it should be noted that the majority of people remember 40 percent of what they saw and 10 percent of what they heard [Potter, 2001, p. 24], and that the perception of information is both an *active* and *social* process [Buckingham, 1991, p. 22].

The conclusion that follows is that there are many factors contributing to the success of pop culture media texts: reliance on folklore and mythology; permanency of metaphors; consistent embodiment of the most sustained story lines; synthesis of the natural and supernatural; addressing the emotional, not the rational, through identification (imaginary transformation into characters and merger with the aura of a work); protagonists' "magic power"; standardization

(replication, unification, and adaptation) of ideas, situations, characters, etc.; motley; serialization; compensation (illusion of dreams coming true); happy end; rhythmic organization of movies, TV programs or video clips where the audience is affected not only by the content of images but also their sequence; intuitive guessing at the audience's subconscious strivings; etc.

Table 6.   Interpretation/Appraisal Indicator Development Levels

№	Interpretation/Appraisal Indicator Development Levels:	Description of Interpretation/Appraisal Indicator Development Levels:
1	High	Ability to analyze critically the functioning of media flows and media in society given various factors, based on highly developed critical thinking; analysis of media texts, based on the perceptive ability close to comprehensive identification; ability to analyze and synthesize the spatial and temporal form of a text; comprehension and interpretation implying comparison, abstraction, induction, deduction, synthesis, and critical appraisal of the author's views in the historical and cultural context of his work (expressing reasonable agreement or disagreement with the author, critical assessment of the ethical, emotional, esthetic, and social importance of a message, ability to correlate emotional perception with conceptual judgment, extend this judgment to other genres and types of media texts, connect the message with one's own and other people's experience, etc.); this reveals the critical autonomy of a person; his/her critical analysis of the message is based on the high-level content, motivation, and perception indicators.
2	Medium	Ability to analyze critically the functioning of media flows and media in society given some most explicit factors, based on medium-level critical thinking; ability to characterize message characters' behavior and state of mind, based on fragmentary knowledge; ability to explain the logical sequence of events in a text and describe its components; absence of interpretation of the author's views (or their primitive interpretation; in general, critical analysis is based on the medium-level content, motivation, and perception indicators.
3	Low	Inability to analyze critically the functioning of media flows and media in society and to think critically; unstable and confused judgments; low-level insight; susceptibility to external influences; absence (or primitiveness) of interpretation of authors' or characters' views; low-level tolerance for multivalent and complex media texts; ability to rehash a story line; generally, analysis is based on the medium-level content, motivation, and perception indicators.

Table 7.   Activity Indicator Development Levels

№	Activity Indicator Development Levels:	Description of Activity Indicator Development Levels:
1	High	Practical ability to choose independently and create/distribute media texts (including those created personally or collectively) of different types and genres; active media self-training ability
2	Medium	Practical ability to choose and create/distribute media texts (including those created personally or collectively) of different types and genres with the aid of specialists (consultants)

3	Low	Inability (or very weakly expressed ability) to choose and create/ distribute media texts; inability or reluctance to engage in media self-training.

Table 8. Creativity Indicator Development Levels

№	*Creativity Indicator Development Levels:*	*Description of Creativity Indicator Development Levels:*
1	High	Expressed creativity in different types of activity (perceptive, play, esthetic, research, etc.) connected with media (including computers and Internet)
2	Medium	Creativity is not strongly expressed and manifests itself only in some types of activity connected with media
3	Low	Creative media abilities are weak, fragmentary or absent at all.

Regretfully, there is a danger of narrowing down media literacy/competence to computer or Internet literacy levels (which is the case with some Russian organizations and associations). In our view, such practices ignore influential mass media (the press, TV, radio, and cinema), which is a discriminatory approach to the problem.

Thus we arrive at the conclusion that ***the media literacy/competence of personality is the sum total of the individual's motives, knowledge, skills, and abilities (indicators: motivation, contact, content, perception, interpretation/appraisal, activity, and creativity) to select, use, create, critically analyze, appraise, and transfer media texts in various forms and genres and to analyze the complex processes of media flows and media functioning.***

5. Media Educational Print Resources in Russia

The Moscow publishing houses have published many media literacy books for schoolchildren & teachers. Articles about media education were published in magazines "Alma Mater", "Pedagogic", "Cinema Art", "Specialist", "Cultural & Information Work", etc. One of the main media education source is a scientific research. The first Ph.D. dissertations devoted to the problems of media literacy emerged else in the '1960s-'1970s (O.Baranov, Y.Rabinovich, I.Levshina, S.Ivanova, S.Penzin, U.Usov, etc.). First dissertations devoted to the media education of pupils opened the way for the investigation on the media education problem in Russian universities. The most notable works on the media education theme in universities emerged in the 1980s – 1990s (S.Penzin, S.Odintsova, A.Fedorov, etc.). First works touching the problems of the new media education (including Internet Literacy) were written in the end of 1980's - middle 1990's (A. Sharikov, A.Fedorov, L.Zaznobina, E.Yastrebseva)

Since the mid 1960s Russian educators (O.Baranov, U.Usov, S.Penzin, A.Sharikov, A.Spitchkin, L.Zaznobina,, E.Yastrebtseva and others) have publishes dozens of programs on media & Internet education.

I can distinguish the following types of the tutorial media education programs (basic education, distance & Internet education, combined education):

- programs for the future professionals in the field of media: screen-writers, directors, camera-men, film-critics, etc. (L.Zaitseva, K.Isaeva,   I.Waisfeld, I.Trutko, M.Vlasov, R.Urenev and others);
- programs for secondary schools (O.Baranov, L.Bagenova, E.Bondarenko, U.Usov, U.Rabinovich, L.Zaznobina, A.Sharikov, E.Yastrebtseva, etc.);
- programs for universities and colleges, including pedagogical institutes, the institutes of the teacher training institute (E.Gorbulina, O.Nechai, S.Penzin, G.Polichko, U.Usov, A.Spitchkin, A.Fedorov, etc.);
- programs for the complementary education of the audience in centers of the aesthetic and Internet education (sorts of "community centers"): I.Grachenkova, E.Yastrebtseva, Y.Bykhovsky, etc.

According to the types of media education's models these programs can include the history and theory of media, creative, practical, games, discussions. As to the typology of the tutorial material of programs, they can be linearly or spirally (Penzin, 1987; Sharikov, 1990; Usov, 1993; Fedorov, 2001).

6. Conclusions

My researches revealed that as media education is not yet an obligatory component of the state Russian schools program, lots of teachers (especially older generation) do not implement it. Some school teachers use media in their classroom just as an illustration for the lesson's theme. A media text is not a matter of study in that case. And only few teachers do try to integrate elements of media education. For the most part, these are "advanced", interested, competent teachers who graduated from Teacher Training Institutes where special course on media & Internet literacy was taught and who have an access to quality resources including theoretical books, textbooks, model lessons or magazines on media and Internet literacy. The interviewed teachers follow the "Popular Arts paradigm" and Critical paradigm". Sometimes their attitude to media education is a synthesis of these two paradigms.

In contradiction to some other countries (for example, the USA or Canada), the school education is centralized in Russia. The Ministry of Education works out the national basic school program, the one and compulsory for all schools. The number of elective subjects is very small compared to the obligatory ones.

As I have already mentioned, the state educational curriculum does not include media literacy. Some institutions take media literacy initiations: the laboratory of media education of Russian Academy of Education (Moscow) wrote experimental educational standards on media education at schools (integrated into the curriculum), the Kurgan Teacher Training Institute uses its own programs of media education (Spitchkin, 1999). Since 2002 Taganrog State Pedagogical Institute has the Official university level specialization *Media Education* (official registration N 03.13.30) and media education programs' book.

However these innovations are realized just in relatively few Russian schools and universities. That is why the development of media literacy in Russia depends on the individual efforts of teachers (relatively young as a rule), who try to

integrate media education in different subject areas or conduct extra-curricular classes (or clubs) on media culture.

The Russian Ministry of Education is aware of this problem and in future promises to provide technological resources in the areas of sound, video & Internet equipment (for example with the help of Federation for Internet Education).

One of the institutions that provide assistance for the media literacy is Russian Association for Film & Media Education. Teachers and university professors who joined it write doctors' thesis on media & Internet literacy, elaborate models of media education, curriculum materials for schools and universities, publish books (Fedorov, 1989, 1999, 2001, 2002, 2004, 2005, 2007; Baranov and Penzin, 2005; Sharikov, 1990; Spitchkin, 1999; Usov, 1993 and others), provide workshops and seminars on media education. These efforts are aimed at developing pupils' and students' personality – developing an appreciation and critical thinking and analysis, media creativity, etc.

Teachers that I interviewed define their approach to media & Internet literacy in this way: media education is subsidiary to basic education; media & Internet education as effective means for the development of personality; media education is a new possibility for the creative games & group forms of media work; media & Internet education is the means of active practical work with pupils.

Russian teachers report that their long-term media aims are the development of pupils' personality, critical & aesthetical consciousness with the help of advanced media equipment, including Internet.

I think that modern Russia needs the concrete strategies of development of the media education projects. This strategy must concentrate their intentions not only on the technical media equipment of Russian schools but also on the new methodologies, of consuming digital images and information. Russian education needs a productive cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Association for Media Education, Federation for Internet Education, Educational web-sites' & CD-ROMs' producers. Russian education needs also international cooperation for Media Education.

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Short CV

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