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## Media Educational Potential of the Television Industry in Improving Media Literacy of Broad Audience

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### Abstract

Media educational potential of the television industry in improving media literacy of broad audience is represented in the article. The complex of theoretical and empirical methods such as: modeling; case-study; classification; design; testing (n=276) is used. The conclusion is made according to the results of the study, that is media educational potential of the television industry in improving media literacy of broad audience is mostly laid in the opportunity of modern television channels to make an off-air interaction with real audience (realizing it in on-line and off-line spaces), thus attracting the audience. Using of media educational potential of the television industry in improving media literacy of broad audience increases confidence to television channels and also makes the television content more demanding and competitive. That is the reason why media educational potential of the television industry in improving media literacy of broad audience is interpreted as a special model of media culture development of modern neo-information society, based on principals of media responsible approach (according to media ethnic rules and standards) to realization of media communications by all actors of media space – media producers and media consumers (taking into account the combination of these media roles in modern sociocultural realities).

**Keywords:** media, media education, media educational potential, television, television industry, media communications, media literacy, media culture, audience, modeling.

### 1. Introduction

The importance of the television industry in the development of media culture of neo-information society is obvious. In modern sociocultural and media communication functions of the television industry can be considered in the connection with the formation of media educational practice (Fedorov, 2019; Ibrahim, Abdullahi, 2022; Johnson, Williams, 2019; Levitskaya, 2022; Mohammed, Abubakar, 2023; Oleshko et al., 2021; Sharikov, 2016; Shesterkina et al., 2021; Smith, De Los Santos, 2022; Smith, Johnson, 2023; White, Green, 2022).

As a result, we can declare about media educational potential of the television industry, that is defined as “the combination of technical means of television company, knowledge, skills of television workers, aimed at training the staff and forming media culture of the audience with developed communicative capacities and high level of media competence” (Yefanov, Pugachev, 2023a: 198). By previous studies we have realized the modeling of media educational potential of the television industry (MEPTI) singling out three distinctive models: MEPTI in the media training

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of professionals; MEPTI in the qualification improvement of professionals; MEPTI in improving media literacy of broad audience (Yefanov, Pugachev, 2023b). However, the meaning of MEPTI in improving media literacy of broad audience has not been revealed completely till now, it needs to be studied in accordance with media educational practices.

## 2. Materials and methods

The purpose of this study is to conceptualize media educational potential of the television industry in improving media literacy of broad audience as a special model of the development of media culture in modern neo-information society. The complex of theoretical and empirical methods are used such as: modeling; case-study; classification; design; testing (n=276).

The design method is focused on developing of media educational courses on the base of a television company. An experimental base is *STRC Orenburg*, where the author's media educational project is being implemented.

To make the realizing media educational project effective, the method of students' testing is applied, where the students are from Orenburg secondary schools. The entrance and final tests let us see the dynamic of media literacy of students from media educational courses and reflect on implementable media teaching practices.

Sampling: continuous. Chronological framework of the study: 2020–2023 years.

## 3. Discussion

In the article *The Role of Organizations of Journalists in Promoting Media Literacy – Building Credibility and Trust* the authors I. Kanižaj and S. Lechpammer did a survey inside journalists' organizations of the European Union to find out how deep the representatives of different mass media are engaged in the work against disinformation, fake news and the audience manipulation (Kanižaj, Lechpammer, 2019). It has turned out that the majority realizes the importance of it, but not everyone does anything in this respect. The representatives from 11 organizations of 19 ones, that took part in the study, agreed that journalists must be more active in improving media literacy.

It is no use arguing that the democratic society needs qualified journalism, which in its turn needs media literate audience (Ahmed, Ali, 2022; Bender, 2023; Brown et al., 2023; Chelysheva, Mikhaleva, 2023; Loos, Ivan, 2022; Mensah et al., 2023; Savchuk, 2020; Sidorov, Melnik, 2021; Suzina et al., 2020; Vandeyar, 2020). Expectations and requests of the audience define the professionalism of media and its content that is why media competence of broad audience is so important for impartial and socially responsible journalism. Media literacy improvement is the investment in democracy, while for media resources it is an opportunity to enhance the confidence of the society. At times of strong competition on the information market, the question of confidence is a defining one in choosing the channel to get the news. Mass media can take more active role in popularizing of professional journalism principles that might help to control disinformation and different companies, which manipulate the social opinion.

## 4. Results

Fast developing social media has formed the demand of the society in media self development and in getting skills to make and consume the content on a higher level. Everyone wants to navigate on the information market, however nowadays only media professionals can do it well. The given situation is the first reason of the projects' success which satisfy the demand of the society.

One of the examples is a satiric television program *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart*, that has been broadcast for many years on the American channel *Comedy Central*. The program is based on the deconstruction of the mass media information, when a TV presenter satirizes incorrect journalists' work in covering political news, thus making the audience think critically. A TV presenter – comedian broke journalistic rules deliberately to attract the audience attention. In the article *The Effects of Media Literacy of Daily Show with Jon Stewart* the author D. Donaldson says: "Either comedian or teachers know that the best way to attract attention to the rule is to break it. Breaking journalistic rules in the context of journalism, *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* teach the audience media literacy, that is to take into account the language and the rules that are used to make media messages" (Donaldson, 2024).

There is one more interesting approach that is used in this program – the authors fulfill the tasks that journalists must fulfill but they do not do it, for example they sometimes do not check

the information. D. Donaldson describes one of these editions, where the reporter of the show went to South Africa to tell about the racial tension. Some mass media claimed that South Africa was suffering from racial tension and from mutual hatred between white and black people. The reporter interviewed many people on the streets and found out that there was not any hatred, while mass media gave incorrect information. The program presenter showed shock when he heard that journalists had misrepresented the situation. This show is not about making news, it is about consuming it.

Blaming journalists in subjectivity, Jon Stewart does not demand objectivity of TV channels, but he asks the audience not to consume every news as the objective one, he says that the audience should have their own opinion on everything. Sometimes it can be enough just to check the facts. Let us show it with the edition about the conflicts in the Middle East. In the beginning of the program we see politics claiming that “the USA try to make peace, democracy and stability in the Middle East”, “we are spreading peace in the Middle East”, “everyone wants peace”, but then there are some fragments of the TV news with the message about the supply of arms to Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Oman, Kuwait, Bahrain. “It seems that there are not any obstacles for our plan to send arms for billion and billion dollars to the most unstable region of the world with the purpose of making peace there. It is so nice that we have supplied our allies with high-tech arms, because they might need them to defend from our new high-tech arms” (*The Daily...*, 2017), – sneers Jon Stewart, saying that there are many countries in the world, that “have not been completely pacified” by the USA yet.

By using satire the TV show appeals to very important ideas of media education: any media text is the construction, made according to certain rules; mass media have rooted values; the aim of media business is the profit; different people consume the same news in different ways. *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* – is not the only TV project of such a format. This way of educating the audience in media might be the example of realizing of some media educational ideas: the *protectionist* one, as satirizing, it can defend the audience from the negative effect of the fabricated news; the *practical* one, as it tells about the ways of working with information; the *interactive* one, when the journalist is a TV presenter-comedian; the *cultural* one, when it explains different meanings of the same media text for different kinds of the audience; the *ideological* one, when politicians are satirized.

The denunciation of people’s vices, the whole society or the political system can be estimated by adult audience. We should mention children, giving the examples of media literacy improvements for broad audience with the help of TV channels. Many media teachers are sure that the main efforts of media education must be directed to the young audience.

The German TV channel for kids and young people *KiKA (Kinder-Kanal)* performs this task successfully. There is a special editorial *Audience*, where the editors answer messages of all children. Popular programs have chats, where kids communicate with the editorial office, TV presenters and the guests of the channel. The broadcast program consists of cartoons, feature films, TV series, TV games and also kids news. The channel has kids’ editorial office, its editors make editions and tell the audience about their work in children editorial board, showing the backstage of television. In promotional video on the official website of the channel children answer the question “Why is there the kids’ editorial office?” with the following words: “This is because *KiKA* would like children to not just communicate well, but to participate in programs making” (*KiKA*, 2024).

From media educational point of view, their participation in this process as well as topics of TV programs are valuable. For example, they tell how the life of a streamer and a web-video producer looks like, they show the process of musical and mind game making. The audience can get to know what is happening off-screen not only while broadcasting. The editorial office of *Audience* invite school children over 12 to take part in the channel’s projects, they can see with their own eyes the process of preparing live broadcast. There are also excursions in the television company for school children where they can see the studios and meet TV presenters. The students of primary school are taught with the basis of making cartoons.

As for putting programs, films, TV series and cartoons on the air, there are age recommendations for parents: from 3 years; from 6 years; from 10 years. The program director of the channel Astrid Plenk explains the *KiKA* channel policy in the following way: “We want to understand children, their world and experience, we want to entertain and inform them in the best

way and guarantee safe media space for them” (KiKA, 2024). The given examples show systematic work of German kids channel in the sphere of children and parents’ media education.

Speaking about media literacy in broadcasting, it will be wrong not to mention television of Canada, where they have always paid a lot of attention to the spread of media education. In the middle of XX century a media theorist M. McLuhan developed the first in the country training course to study media culture. Today media culture has been being studied since secondary school in this country. The Canadian channel *CHUM Television* made a special media educational department to develop media training programs in 1989 and it was the first in the world. The TV channel belonged to a big media company that stopped working after their merge with another television company in 2007, however media educational potential has been still being realized in Canada.

A *Canadian Center of Digital Media Literacy* was created in 1994 under the auspices of *Canadian National Council*. “Media teachers base on key ideas of media literacy which gives effective basis for studying mass information and popular culture. These key ideas work as filters that are necessary for any media texts to be reacted to” (Mediasmarts, 2024), – it is said on the official website of the centre. The work is done in the collaboration with media companies, there are videos for every key idea of media education that have free access on the Internet under the name of *Media Literacy 101*.

In many academic systems the number 101 defines the introductory course to the subject. Thus, the name *Media Literacy 101* shows that videos are focused on broad audience and there is no need to have deep knowledge of the topic. The Canadian TV channel *CBC* uses the same name to make educational videos for *CBC Kids* in their two-hour morning program. The characters of the videos discuss the behavior in social networks or personal information that is kept on the Internet (Media..., 2023). The working process with these videos is also the content of *CBC Kids*.

In the end of October in Canada the *Week of Media Literacy* is held. The TV channel posted the video *How we Make Explaining Videos* (Explore..., 2023), where they showed the process of work from the topic discussion to necessary video editing and approving it by kids who are the target audience.

The Canadian television pays much attention to the work against fakes in social networks and tells its audience what platforms are the most dangerous for getting information. The Canadian television and radio broadcasting company *CBC* in its news with the heading “90 % of Canadian people have been got caught with fake news” makes the conclusion that the Canadian trust social networks less than cyber criminals. According to the opinion poll survey, *CBC* notes that 68 % of the Canadian face fakes in *Facebook\**, 65 % blame social networks, while 49 % single out *YouTube*. According to the same survey, 45 % of the Canadian claim that they face fake news on television too (Thompson, 2019). Such material on broadcast of television channels can improve their image, as television is considered to be professional media that is doing its best to protect the audience from low quality content off-air. Fake exposures on air and posting social surveys are the message for getting information thoughtfully that is also the basis of media education.

Television channels have many different formats. In the Philippines the *National Children Television Council* established *National Charity Fund for Children Television* in 2021, it finances the production of programs for young audience. This fund studies the content that is so popular with kids, it analyses possible risks and develops effective educational programs.

The educational and entertaining TV series for children *Meriam’s Online-World* (Garcia, 2021) was produced with the help of *National Charity Fund for Children Television* in 2022. The series tells about the life of ten-year-old Meriam who studies in the sixth grade and whose parents live abroad. The girl lives with her aunt Marla, she spends much time in social nets and likes online-games. The guardian Marla is good at social platforms, so they often chat with Marian and this support helps the girl feel herself comfortable in the digital world. The first broadcasting of five-episodes series was timed to the celebration of national day of kids television and radio broadcasting and was shown on the television channel *TVUP*.

*TVUP* was initially the Internet-channel of the *Philippines University*, it became satellite broadcasting channel in 2022 due to partnering with telecommunication company *Signal TV*. The TV series was shown again in the broadcast of free educational channel *IBCEM13*. By words of the project’s author M. Garcia, who is the specialist in media education sphere and the assistant professor of human sciences in the *Philippines University*, this series is recommended for school children as extracurricular work: “Discussion will help them to realize their daily experience and

the current circumstances on the Internet, it will also help to communicate with another kids about the way of solving problems in the digital sphere and it will let them develop critical thinking, respect and care for the others” (Garcia, 2023).

This format was chosen because series are popular with school children. The project *Meriam's Online-World* was marked by *International Media Literacy Council* that is located in the USA, for developing media literacy in such an innovative way. *Meriam's Online-World* is called “the first educational and entertaining material for developing digital media literacy” on official website of *International Media Literacy Council* in the projects’ description of winners of M. Row award *Innovations in Media Literacy Improving*.

We have considered the cases when television channels popularize media literacy in their broadcasting. However, television industry has the potential for working off-line in this sphere. The British television and radio company *BBC* in their official website launched the game for young people *Ireporter*, the participants are tested to distinguish fakes and make the difference between truth and lie. This interactive game is for children and teenagers at the age between 11 and 18, it gives them a chance to be a news journalist. Using mobile phones and computers, their task is to make quick decisions whether they trust resources, political declarations, comments in social nets and photos or not.

According to the script, the participant takes part in making the news edition, gets information from different sources and must show the skill of working with the data. It is necessary to broadcast credible reports and be fast otherwise the contestants will do it quicker. Placing participants in conditions that are very close to reality, *BBC* shows the work of the news service, helps realize the importance of data verification and shows different ways of checking the information. For example, a possible TV viewer sends a photo to e-mail of an editorial office, where he is standing near a large metallic construction in the courtyard of the house. The man gives his address in e-mail and says that a piece of a spacecraft has just fallen down in his courtyard. The participant plays the roles of the editor assistant and he is supposed to publish the news on *BBC* resources until contestant have announced it. If he does the task, he gets penalty points, as even the initial check should alert – there is a sunny day on the photo, but according to weather forecast it is rainy there. Having sent the photo to specialists, they find out that the piece of the spacecraft is placed next to the man thanks to the graphics editor program. The only correct decision is to check before publishing.

Another tasks demand to post the news immediately, if there are certain data from reliable source such as official services. The game makes people think critically and analyze the sources of getting information. It was created for young people, however it will be useful for adults too, as everyone risks posting fake news on social net without realizing it. This kind of media literacy spread can be referred to the *practical* idea of media education that is based on media texts making. It is easier to deal with the content, knowing the technology of its production, – M. McLuhan wrote about it, explaining that training of video editing and voicing helps the creators become more critical audience (McLuhan, Fiore, 1967). However, the *practical* idea unlike the *consuming* one trains to make own media texts but not use media for meeting needs. We can claim that this approach is demanding nowadays, as modern consumer is active, while media literacy helps him in creativity, giving chance to get closer to the world of media industry, taking part in the production together with professionals.

We should pay attention to the experience of Russian TV channels in media literacy improvement of broad audience. There is *Stop Fake* on *Russia 24* and *Antifake* on the *First Channel*, moreover, there is *Infoshield* on *NTV* – by authors’ words, this program “using certain examples, shows real motives and aims of aggressive info wars that are so popular in the collective West” (Infoshield, 2023). We should also mention a special documentary project *Be Careful, Fakes!* on *Ren TV*. All these projects appeared at the time of the war conflict between Russia and Ukraine and were the result of an information war. Fakes’ analysis and their obvious revelation is a useful content for media literacy improvement of broad audience.

News leaks and false messages must teach the audience to choose the news resources thoroughly and analyze media text before sharing it in social nets. However, these projects of Russian TV channels are aimed at the analysis of the information field at the time of war conflict and they will not be interesting in the future. Aggressive infeed, many emotionally charged words and expressive vocabulary can be used while the information opposition at the time of the war conflict, but they are not appropriate for system work of media education.

Summarizing described above experience of television channels in media literacy improving of broad audience, we can single out several directions of this process:

1) *fake news disclosure on air* (*Stop Fake on Russia 24*; *Antifake on the First Channel*; *Infoshield on NTV*; *Be Careful, Fakes! on Ren TV* and so on);

2) *public analysis of unprofessional journalistic work* (*Daily Show with Jon Stewart on Comedy Central*);

3) *getting acquainted of the audience with the content making process* (*KiKA*; *CBC Kids*);

4) *broadcasting the content about main ideas of media literacy* (*Meriam's Online – World on TVUP* and *IBCCEM13*; *Media Literacy 101* on *CBC*);

5) *off-air training of content making* (the game *Ireporter* on *BBC*; excursions to television company and training for animation making on *KiKa*);

6) *spread of professional television*. We will not claim that professional work of television channels itself is the spread of media literacy. However, we have mentioned this thesis in the context of well-prepared informative policy of the channel. In periods of crisis, when there are many alarming news, some channels pursue gentle informative policy or offer the audience so called “informative diets”.

*STRC Orenburg* (branch of *RSTRC*) uses different ways of media literacy improving of broad audience with the help of *MEPTI*. It is about on-air and off-air work. Speaking about gentle informative policy, there is an example of *News Disinfection* campaign. At the time of pandemic there were many fakes about coronavirus infection, so *STRC Orenburg* carried out *News Disinfection* campaign in 2020. Journalists released one newscast without the news about coronavirus every day. On a plan of editorial office, it let the audience take a break in a huge flow of frightening stories and help not panic as it stops from getting the information, using critical thinking.

The company conducts explanatory work, telling the audience how programs are made. The example can be the talk-show *It is all Double-Bass Fault* that is broadcast on regional television channels of *Russia 1* and *Russia 24*. The technology of combining real and virtual images is used in the program, which is popular in films and TV production. However, unlike feature films, chroma key operating principles are shown to the audience in this talk show. Virtual decorations behind TV presenters sometimes disappear, showing a real atmosphere of the television studio. This method is used in the scenery and is linked to the topic of every program edition. The program is shown in the recording the spectators in the studio have a chance to see the process of making the program before TV audience see it. There are screen to show graphics that will be used for TV audience while editing. The preparation for the talk-show is organized in such a way that any TV viewer can become the guest in the studio and take part in program making, so it is necessary for producers to tell about the principles of virtual studio work.

The company shows the real work of television programs production in another projects as well. In the program *TV Tower* that is broadcast on *Russia 24*, the audience can see the prompter that is used by TV presenter for reading the text, the viewers can also see a big creative team behind a TV presenter, there is director, sound engineer, technician and others. Such methods are used by journalists of *STRC Orenburg* to attract the audience attention; they also show the production process which is one of the media education tasks. According to the opinion of the project producers, showing the process of programs production to the audience makes the television company be closer to its viewers that is valuable in terms of hard competition in the world of media. Trust is important for audience activity; it is difficult to imagine modern television without it.

The consumption idea of media education is based on the audience that is conscious, active and uses media for meeting their own demands. There are scientific facts about the demand of belonging. Describing it, A. Maslow explains that frequent moving of family has negative influence on children, while the lack of good neighbors leads to disorientation. The reason is in “animal” desire of a person to unite – “to flock together”. In the work *Motivation and Personality* A. Maslow explains why groups of social and psychological training and different communities, united with one aims, are so popular (Maslow, 2019: 74). This is the result of people’s desire to cope with the feeling of alienation and loneliness.

Social networks are popular for the same reason, while there are television channels to make the audience bigger. However, social nets are popular platforms for communication, but we can use their potential only by keeping the platform specificity. *YouTube* is a very good case, as it has passed the way from video hosting to community. There are new comments and discussion even under the videos that were posted long time ago. This video hosting that gives users the service of

posting, storing and showing their videos, appeared in 2005 and they presented their new function *YouTube Community* in 2016. The video hosting users made a conclusion that *YouTube* can be considered as a social net. *Twitter\** followed the same way in 2021. The social net let its users set up communities.

Speaking about interactive projects of *STRC Orenburg*, we should mention the channel *STRC Orenburg LIVE* – the platform for live broadcasts in *Telegram*, *YouTube* and *Vkontakte*. The television company are on-air hand-in-hand with television broadcast, moreover, they post exclusive content such as failed shoots from programs recording or the audience survey before and after broadcast. However, the most valuable and innovative thing is using the system of automated collecting of messages. The program *TV Tower* broadcasts at the same time on television air, social nets, while there are messages and comments of viewers on the TV screen and it does not matter what platform they use to watch this media product. The users of *Telegram*, *YouTube*, *Vkontakte* and TV viewers see messages of each other and the resource the information comes from during broadcasting. In other words, the program has turned into community, having united TV viewers with soul mates from different social media. There is information on the description account of *STRC Orenburg LIVE* how to send a message to the TV air and it can be considered as improving communicative skills.

In social media television channels can have the audience communication after broadcasting and it might be the reason to come back to published material, thus having given a story in development. There was such a case with broadcast live on *STRC Orenburg* with a problem of homeless dogs. The stream was on *Russia 24* channel and in social nets. After the air, that was recorded, the users of social media started discussing it. The editorial office of *STRC Orenburg* took part in the discussion too via their official account and encouraged the audience to be more active. There were many stories of dogs' attacks on people in messages. The news editorial office shot the story where the authors of these messages, who suffered, took part.

The material was shown on the regional air of TV channel *Russia 1* and in social media, where there were many comments, using these comments, the editorial office found out new problematic places with aggressive animals. New information was used in the final weekly analytical program *News of Orenburg. Events of the Week (Vesti..., 2023)*. Encouraging discussions of the materials in social media, *STRC Orenburg* increases the coverage, gets new ideas for making content, while the audience get new communicative skills with professional media.

Via TV broadcasting the company promotes their accounts in social nets, explaining the audience how they can take part in programs making. Getting closer to social nets, television makes stylistics and material presentation easier, however television channels should not copy “the language of the street”. They must not do due to moral and legal restrictions. Channels are interested in showing the audience a possible model of behavior and develop high moral standards.

Journalists can not be considered the only specialists in media sphere anymore. Media are not just “traditional” mass media, there are also network publications, social media, messengers, cinema, music, computer games and etc. However, the experience of professional mass media must be taken into account. It is valuable when we speak about the analysis of media texts, ways of influence on people and also informing people about the most modern technical tools. Searching for interactivity, modern mass media have to keep balance between difficult, rich vocabulary and simplified language of social networks. Keeping balance is the only way possible, as the core of the social networks audience differs from the one of television channel. The psychology of interaction with the content is different as well.

*Cultural* idea of media education explains that the audience is various and can put different meanings, analyzing the same media texts. It is necessary to take into account cultural, social and other differences. Mass media should realize it and try to develop media education. In 2010s in Russia the question of school teachers training was very up-to-date, as a result, specialists are of the opinion that “reverse correlation of digital literacy level of school children and teachers is the main collision that prevents from balanced development of media competence in the society” (Yefanov et al., 2020: 392). Without reducing such a gap, media education will not be effective. The whole Russian society is interested in media literacy improving, therefore any practices in this direction are worth being thoroughly analyzed.

*STRC Orenburg* works with media literacy improving of broad audience off-air, focusing on school children. The company regularly invites excursion groups to show its studios, equipment,

the company gives children the opportunity to talk with professional journalists. To do this work regularly, some staff members of the company hold the excursions and it is their job duties.

About 2000 children visit *STRC Orenburg* every year. Journalists show them the process of production, tell them about fakes in social networks that appeared due to verification. Such kind of work can reduce the spread of fake news and professional journalists are interested in it, as they have to check every “loud” news. The employees of the company tell about the promotion of the content in social networks, show the algorithm of their work. *STRC Orenburg* is concerned with this process, as the company posts the content not only in TV and radio broadcasting, but also in social media, where the competence and activity of the audience is especially valuable. *STRC Orenburg* gives such master classes to adults as well, it happens when children come to the excursion with their parents.

On its platforms *STRC Orenburg* discloses fake news and myths which are published by other users. After the tragedy in Orenburg when a pack of dogs bit a small boy to death, one of the local animal rights activist claimed in *Vkontakte* that the boy burned dogs on the fire, put polyurethane foam in their mouths, having thus provoked their attack. *STRC Orenburg*, having made a material about the tragedy before, immediately started the campaign against the spread of this message which was not proved with any facts. In the *Telegram*-channel of *The News of Orenburg Region*, where there are about 20 000 followers, the company informed people that under the law such publications and their reposts might be punished. When the mother of the killed son could find strength and went to court, *STRC Orenburg* was covering the process, explaining the legal aspect of the case. The court obliged the defendant to post disproving information in the social net *Vkontakte* and recovered 700 000 rubles as the compensation of moral damage (Blogger..., 2023). Covering such cases with explanations the essence of the claims to be more responsible in keeping their accounts in social nets.

*STRC Orenburg* realized a high demand on getting skills that gives media education in the process of developing the communication with the audience. In 2019 on the base of *STRC Orenburg* two-months journalistic courses were launched for those who want to plunge in media industry and learn to work with media texts on a high level. About 100 students of different age do the course annually. The course program supposes making TV and radio programs and analysis of information messages, including fake ones.

On one of the lessons children make the news edition in a game format, everyone receives an anonymous audio message with the information that medical masks are infected with coronavirus in pharmacies as they come to Russia from China, being already infected. Such fakes really took place at the time of pandemic from some anonymous resources. Children, in their turn, have to take a decision whether they should tell about it in the news edition, in case if they decide to check this information, they have to find the way to do it. In the result of working with data it turns out that some mass media have already called the news about sending infected masks fake, while there is still panic in social nets. Such lesson help children develop critical thinking and know how to check the information.

While doing the course, students communicate with practicing journalists and with a lawyer of the company, who explains the cases when people have been fined for posts and reposts. In the process of education students understand the difference between informative program from publicistic one, why emotions are needed in the news and how to see video editing when it is hidden. When children are explained how commercial advertising works, they have the task to analyze the reasons of their desires – to possess the promoting item. The students of the course try to make rills which promote a healthy lifestyle and they really understand how the promotion works. As a result, children get valuable knowledge that might help them not be affected by destructive propaganda, not to be manipulated, but become more demanding media consumers and have a more professional view on media production.

The project of school children education on the base of *STRC Orenburg* is a kind of experiment, where its quality is being measured by testing methods to get high results. School children are of different age in a group that is why to improve the program we took a decision to offer entrance test for every group. The task was to define what knowledge in the sphere of media education and what skills children have. We collect metrics of the training effectiveness with the test, there are certain numbers – points for the done test. The entrance test is done after the first introductory lesson where we explain the reason for knowledge testing to minimize possible protests of children and have serious attitude to the exam.



Testing might be used to check knowledge before and after the training course, that is why we decided to do it after the course finishes too. The main task of the entrance exam is to collect metrics to improve the course program, but not to define the level of a child. That is the reason why children specify their age while the testing is done anonymously. There are 25 questions in the test and they can be divided into three blocks: journalism; specificity of television; skills for working with information in social nets. While the second testing, students are asked to write about the advantages of this course for them. We have tested 276 students from 7 to 16 years old at the period of between 2020 and 2023. It is important to mention that the knowledge level of school children in the sphere of media communications before and after two-month course is especially interesting in terms of the study. This approach lets us fix media educational potential of the television industry in improving media literacy of broad audience.

Testing before the start of the course shows that school children, who have decided to do it, get news mostly from social nets – 57 %. 25 % of children watch TV news listen to radio or read fake websites. 8 % of respondents get the news from their friends and relatives. It is seen from the test that respondents know a little about the history of journalism and even less about the specificity of television (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Media literacy diagnostic of students from media educational courses in *STRC Orenburg* (entrance testing)

Test question	Number of correct answers	
	n	%
One television channel differs from another one mostly....	66	24
What is the main thing that differs the audience of one TV channel from another one?	88	32
The invention of printing press in ... was an important event in mass media development.	33	12
A journalist recorded five viewers for doing the story about the premiere, but he left just two of them. Why?	69	25
What must the news story must be like?	69	25
When did TV broadcasting start in Orenburg region?	28	10
What programs can a TV presenter express his own opinion, feelings and ideas in?	28	10

There is such a low level of the students in media theory because this module is not included in the educational program of secondary school. However, children got new information for two months, doing the course in *STRC Orenburg*, moreover, theory was given as a part of practice. This approach helped us involve children in problems considered.

The testing method did not suppose the following informing students about the correct answers they were told that all information would be given in the process of education. After the course children were offered to do the test again. The difference in answers before and after the course is shown in the Table 2.

Getting this knowledge not just broaden mind, but also lets school children be more demanding media consumers. When students of the course learn the rules and demands for journalistic materials and try to make them themselves, they start feeling the prejudice of the reporter and subjective attitude to the news. Students become more demanding to the content in social media, as they meet the same formats: interview, report, information article and etc.

While entrance testing, it turned out that the course students on the base of *STRC Orenburg* understand the language of social nets and rules of behavior on these platforms. 86 % answered correctly that opinion leaders are called the people who influence the opinion of the others, expressing their ideas in public. 88 % gave the correct answers why the author of text message writes in capital letters. 72 % know that Gif is the image format.

**Table 2.** Media literacy diagnostic of students from media educational courses in *STRC Orenburg* (entrance and final testing)

Test question	Number of correct answers	
	before the course, %	after the course, %
One television channel differs from another one mostly....	24	100
What is the main thing that differs the audience of one TV channel from another one?	32	100
The invention of printing press in ... was an important event in mass media development.	12	86
A journalist recorded five viewers for doing the story about the premiere, but he left just two of them. Why?	25	100
What must the news story must be like?	25	100
When did TV broadcasting start in Orenburg region?	10	92
What programs can a TV presenter express his own opinion, feelings and ideas in?	10	98

The authors of the entrance test were pleased to know that 98 % of school children are ready to block the account at once if they get threats from it and they immediately tell about this threatening message to their parents. Only 2 % of children can ignore a threat. However, no one said that they would start texting with the unknown account. All respondents showed low resistance to manipulating via media texts and showed weak knowledge in this sphere. In the [Table 3](#) there are questions that school children answered, there are also answers before and after the course.

**Table 3.** Knowledge dynamics of students from media educational course in *STRC Orenburg* in the sphere of media communication theory (on the base of entrance and final testing)

Test question	Number of correct answers	
	before the course, %	after the course, %
Evaluation, formed in advance, which is based on widespread and simplified notion of the subject, phenomenon or type of a person, – it is ...	12	90
What can indicate the prejudice in the text?	10	9
Show the case of propaganda	16	94
The fact – it is...	30	100
Suggestions – they are...	24	96
Why they make representative sampling for surveys?	16	98
What is the difference between propaganda and advertisement?	24	98

Students analyzed commercial advertisements of children goods on lesson after getting the theory, then they try to make the advertisement attractive for their potential target audience. Working with rills, that promoted a healthy lifestyle, school children singled out what exactly formed a relevant opinion, what caused emotions and why the authors chose a certain image to represent the characters of the video.

These lessons helped school children implement rational thinking in watching emotional content. The students showed intuitive and analytical approaches that prevent from being manipulated. Media educational project of *STRC Orenburg* lets us claim that such media literacy lessons must be systematically used in secondary school, when there will be certain media pedagogical approaches that are suitable for kids.

After media literacy improving course on the base of *STRC Orenburg*, school children were asked to give a feedback and say what useful knowledge and skills they got. The students gave full answers; we would like to single out some of them:

1) “I have improved my skills of using information resources, keeping the rules of copyright. I have learned to single out the main information in the text and now I can write informative notes quickly”;

2) “I have learned what the news production is and what kind of information should be in the edition. I have tried myself as a TV presenter and a reporter and now I understand his duties”;

3) “I have worked a lot with my voice, now I know that it is possible to give the news in different ways, using intonation, tempo and pauses. I liked acting classes very much”;

4) “I have understood that a journalist must be very educated and that being a journalist is a big responsibility. I was fond of giving and taking interviews”;

5) “When I am reading the news publications, I always pay attention to the resource of information. I never read the news if I do not know where it comes from”;

7) “Now I understand the news better, I know the structure of TV spot. I was keen on making TV reports”;

8) “I liked thinking up and searching for topics for the news. Now I know that the main news should be in the beginning of the program”;

9) “Now I know how to make an advertisement and now I understand why I like watching toys advertising so much”;

10) “The most important thing is that I have finally chosen the profession. I will become a journalist. I wanted to be a blogger, however I need journalistic education”.

Summing up everything, mentioned above, we can single out the main directions of *STRC Orenburg* activities from the positions of media educational potential of television industry in improving media literacy of broad audience:

- a) disclosure of fake news from social nets in the broadcasting;
- b) showing the process of TV programs making to TV viewers;
- c) switching to comfortable communicative platform for communicating with viewers;
- d) excursions for school children;
- e) spread of high-qualitative television content;
- f) off-air media literacy education in terms of media educational courses.

Taking into account the popularity of media educational courses on the base of *STRC Orenburg*, we will keep on working in this direction. It is important to keep in mind that any television channel of professional media company has a big media educational potential, but it should not be just on-air work.

## 5. Conclusion

Media educational potential of television industry in improving media literacy of broad audience is laid in opportunities of modern television channels to make systematic off-air interaction with real audience (which is realized in on-line and off-line spaces), thus attracting potential audience. Modern media consumer has become more active – he takes part in content making and watches educational videos with a big interest. The usage of media educational potential of television industry in improving media literacy of broad audience increases the confidence to television channels and makes television content be more demanding and competitive.

Media educational potential of television industry in improving media literacy of broad audience is interpreted as a special model for developing media culture of modern neo-information society, based on principles of media responsible approach (according to media ethical standards and rules) in implementation of media communication on behalf of all actors of media space – media producers and media consumers (taking into account considerable combination of these media roles in sociocultural realities).

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