ABSTRACT

Today media competence has become very significant for every person, particularly for teachers. Their media education skills can help their students feel safely and comfortably in media information space, develop their critical thinking and also protect teachers themselves. Media educated countries, including the USA, have a relevant experience in developing the required skills of teaching staff. Thus, the aim of the study is to analyze the US experience of media training for teachers. The focus is put on higher school media training of future teachers. The methodology of the study involves a set of theoretical and applied methods, the integrity of which can give the most reliable scientific results. It was found out that media training of teachers in the USA is carried out within the framework of formal, non-formal, and informal education. A complex analysis of the first option demonstrated that future teachers obtain media training in formal education as special training in communications; as a separate (compulsory or optional) training course (classical or online); as a component of each course taught at the university. The results of the analysis were illustrated with examples from US university and college practice. They showed that media training of a higher school student, a future teacher, is projected for his/her further practical activity. The elements of such training are: theoretical foundations of media education either separately or within most of disciplines; practice in the audience to consolidate media skills; practice outside the classroom, in a real school environment with real students; creating a media product. The progressive ideas of the US experience can bring a lot of benefits to Ukrainian educational system, particularly to the process of media training of future teachers.

Keywords: teachers’ media training, higher school students, formal education, the USA, progressive ideas.
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продемонстрував, що майбутні учителі отримують медіаосвітню підготовку в формальній освіті як спеціальну підготовку з комунікацій; як окремий (обов’язковий або факультативний) навчальний курс (класичний або онлайн); як складову кожного курсу, що викладається в університеті. Результати аналізу проілюстровані прикладами із діяльності американських університетів і коледжів. Вони показали, що медіаосвіта підготовка студента вищої школи, майбутнього викладача, здійснюється з прицілом на його/її подальшу практичну діяльність. Елементами такої підготовки є: теоретичні основи медіаосвіти, що викладаються окремо, або в межах більшості дисциплін; практика в аудиторії для закріплення медіаосвітніх навичок; практика поза аудиторією, в реальному шкільному середовищі з реальними учнями; створення медіапродукту. Прогресивні ідеї американського досвіду можуть стати в нагоді українській освітній системі, зокрема, медіаосвітній підготовці майбутніх учителів.

Ключові слова: медіаосвіта підготовка учителів, студенти вищої школи, формальна освіта, США, прогресивні ідеї.

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays media competence has become very significant for every person. The attention to its development has constantly been paid to, since the beginning of the 20th century. The special focus was made on children, schoolchildren, senior students of full secondary and vocational schools as well as students of universities. Yet, the question of young people’s media competency has still been very urgent despite the availability of learning resources, adequate pedagogical methodology which has been worked out both by scholars and teachers in their close cooperation. However, there are a plenty of issues to be solved. One of them is the media education of teachers themselves and the development of their media education skills.

A number of striking examples from the teaching practice show the pedagogical staff are greatly lacking such skills even in such a media educated country as the USA.

Michael Marshall, a Richmond Hill teacher (USA), was fired in 2015 after posting comments on Twitter. There he expressed his views on various social and national populations, including the fact that he is saddened by wearing hijabs in public. The network immediately responded to his comments. Numerous community members have stated that these publications are highly offensive, racist, and unacceptable to the teacher. Complaints were made to the school board. As a result, M. Marshall was dismissed (Lipinski, 2017).

Another case of the teacher's lack of awareness of his or her responsibility for speaking out in the media happened in 2016. The principal at Sir Wilfrid Laurier Public School in Markham (Canada) under the name Ghada Sadaka is alleged to share an Islamophobic post in Facebook calling for a ban on burqa in Europe just because bikinis are banned in Muslim countries. In addition, there was a link to website “The Rebel”, which aimed to tell the whole “truth about refugees”. The comments to the articles on this webpage are full of prejudice against potential Muslim-origin migrants in Canada as they all “sympathize with terrorists”. Since then, Ms. Sadaka has repeatedly apologized, stating that she was not aware of that even a small message on social networks could have a great impact and how it could change her own life and the lives of those around her. The principal was forced to go on a year-round leave for her careless statements (Javed, 2016; Lipinski, 2017).

These are only few examples illustrating the importance of development of media education skills and a sense of responsibility of teachers. Moreover, the problem of
providing media training for teachers has only been exacerbated in the digital age. Thus, the question of developing media competence of those who teach young generation, has been rather important and needs more careful attention.

THE AIM OF THE STUDY

In view of the above said, the aim of the study is to analyze what has been or is being done to improve media training of teachers in the USA, one of leading media education providers in the world. The analysis will be performed through the prism of expediency of borrowing the progressive ideas and implementing them in Ukrainian practice of training teachers.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH METHODS

The described cases with the principal G. Sadaki and teacher M. Marshall demonstrate that the risks of insufficient media training for teachers can be significant. The literature overview on the problem shows that governmental educational organizations, administration of educational institutions, scholars and teachers themselves are aware of direct connection and interdependence of the pedagogical education with media training of a teacher him/herself. For example, the American researcher of media education V. Domine (2011, p. 194) stated that the results of basic teacher’s education should be measured precisely within the framework of media education, since its multidimensional nature allows to conceptualize the future teacher’s desire for technological mastery, to realize the pedagogy of perfection and strengthen the democratic ideals and goals of public education in the United States. American scholars D. Bishop, S. Giles, S. Bryant, K. Bryant, S. Domitrovich, M. Greenberg point out that the critical component of the effectiveness of each media education program is the appropriate training of teachers for its implementation (Bishop, Giles et al, 2005, p. 4–5; Domitrovich 2000, p. 193). Our research is based on the analysis of the US higher school experience in media training of future teachers.

The research methodology is based on a complex of such theoretical methods as analysis and synthesis, structural and systematic approaches, comparison and compatibility. They are supported with a set of applied methods (observing, questioning, interviewing). The integral unity of both theoretical and applied methods can give reliable scientific results.

RESULTS

The analysis of cases like the ones described above shows that teachers themselves have a lack of awareness that:
- members of the community in which they live and work can see their posts on social networks;
- for some members of the community, their messages will appear offensive or threatening;
- a teacher should be responsible for everything, not only when he/she is at work at school;
- speaking outside the workplace can have the same serious consequences as in the workplace.

It could be assumed that such cases became possible due to the sporadic media training of teachers. According to the empirical results by American scholars L. Stuhlman and A. Silverblatt (2007), it was found that only 65% of US colleges and universities that teach teachers, offer media education courses to their students, future K-12 teachers. Moreover, only 14 % of these educational institutions teach the basics of media education within the discipline of “Education”; the rest do it in the context of the disciplines “Communication”, “Journalism” and others. As a result, it happens that most teachers
simply do not have the time ... to understand how to use media texts or media questions to
develop critical thinking of their students (Hobbs, 2004, p. 56).

Logically to assume, if teachers are unable to provide proper media education for
learners, the results can be irreversible and, as noted by US scholars, will even “lead to the
loss of democracy in society” (Wineburg et al., 2016).

Obviously, the essential skills of a media competent teacher should be the same as
those of his/her students – the ability to distinguish a fact from a thought, the ability to
carry out an accurate analysis or a deep deconstruction of the media message. It is these
skills that create the foundation for teachers’ and students’ critical thinking and equip them
with the knowledge and practical skills to filter information and prepare them for lifelong
learning (CML, 2020).

According to the analysis of relevant literature (web sites of US universities,
electronic educational platforms, scientific literature, etc.), media training of teachers in the
USA is carried out:
– within the framework of formal education, when future teachers receive the first
and second levels of higher education;
– within the framework of non-formal education, when practicing teachers acquire
the media skills they need through various scientific and methodological events organized
by the school administration, professional public associations, which are a manifestation of
their professional development;
– within the framework of information education, engaging in self-development
and self-improvement of their professional skills.

The limits of the article do not allow to dwell upon on every way of teachers’
media training. That is why, we will focus our attention on the first way – how future
teachers’ media training is provided in colleges and universities.

The international research TALIS (Teacher and Learning International Survey)
conducted by Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2015)
found that 60 % of teachers need digital and media skills, above all. The cause of such an
extreme need is their lack of primary media training (Blackwell, 2014, p. 1–2), that is in
college or university.

In the United States, according to the data by Center for Media Literacy (CML,
2020), there are now more than 3 million teachers, not including religious mentors, youth teachers
in churches, temples, synagogues. In addition, leaders of scout organizations, coaches and
organizers of extracurricular facilities, sports sections and other pedagogical staff are engaged
in teaching children and the younger generation. The primary task of modern teachers is not
simply to convey a certain amount of information to their students, but to unobtrusively
direct their efforts to find information in the right direction (Stuhlman, Siverblatt, 2007).
Currently, the priority in the modern teachers’ activity is the facilitation of the educational
process, cooperation with students on the principles of equality, humanism and democracy.

US universities and colleges that train teaching staff take these changes into account
and develop curricula accordingly, including transformations of media training for future
teachers. Teaching future teachers in the formal education system is referred to in the US as
“pre-service” (CML, 2020) and is considered the first stage of their professional development.

An analysis of the official sites of US universities has highlighted the following
ways for future teachers to obtain media training in formal education:
– as special training in communications;
– as a separate (compulsory or optional) training course (classical or online);
– as a component of each course taught at the university.
The importance and effectiveness of the latter cannot be underestimated. Media education elements in every course of the teacher training curriculum do not destroy its content, but can bring many benefits to the future teacher. However, the effectiveness of this method depends entirely on the creativity of the university teacher, and its analysis seems quite problematic, since it requires generalization of the practical activity of teachers of different disciplines of different specialties and specializations. Besides, not all teachers are networking and sharing their experience of incorporating media education into the educational process within a specific training course.

Instead, the first two ways can be easily analyzed from information posted on the official websites of US institutions of higher learning. For example, the College of Education in University of Massachusetts (2018) prepares teachers for elementary, middle, and junior high and high school in subjects such as English, history, math, political science, or political philosophy, natural sciences and foreign languages (Chinese, French, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish). Special training in media education, in particular in the field of communications, at this university has 3 levels:

- basic, which includes 5 courses in the study of concepts and theories of communication, qualitative and quantitative research methods, an introductory course in the basic specialty and 1 credit of seminars;
- central, designed for 600–700 hours;
- advanced, 800-hour seminar cycle for a narrow graduate specialization.

Media training for future teachers is provided in an online format of 51 elective courses (UMassOnline, 2018), some of which are: media analysis, communication workshop, gender and communications, information and personal communication technologies; introduction to communication theory; love, sex and media influence; new media and personality; political communications; Internet communication, women and media; advertising in the media; introduction to film studies; introduction to media culture, etc. In addition, there are also courses that focus on media training for students, such as: climate change; creativity, technology and education; creation of inclusive educational environment; development of strategies: child-adult; the dynamics of cultural change; education of different categories of population, etc.

Another alternative to media training for future teachers at the University of Massachusetts is an online media education course that is recommended for those who plan to work at K-12 school or community-based organizations. This course introduces students to an overview of media education theories, concepts, problems, and perspectives; practical and analytical research in this field. It is important that this course has the necessary component of civic engagement, that is, students work with the youth community, participate in various youth projects related to the development of media literacy skills. The Media Education course, named in the curriculum as COMM 427 (communication) covers 4 credits, and is scheduled for the summer semester (May-June). Its cost is $ 402 per credit, but the teaching materials are free. The course is a necessary prerequisite for obtaining a Certificate of Education and meets the requirements of an integrated Bachelor of Arts training experience.

The University also has a Center for Online and Digital Learning, which offers prospective teachers ongoing support in how to teach, using digital media. In addition, each class has an online component: lectures and seminars are recorded, enabling absent students to join online or later via remote access; students use tablets and laptops, receive and send completed assignments in online format, use group video chats to communicate.
In the belief of M. Koehler and P. Mishra (Koehler, Mishra, 2006), the media training of the teacher, before he/she enters the class, must pass according to the formula TPCK (Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge). Indiana University Bloomington keeps to this formula. It trains different educational specialists: junior, middle, senior, and high school teachers, counselors, school psychologists, educational leaders, curriculum developers, journalists, and scholars at the School of Education (2018).

In addition to special courses for future educators, Indiana University provides a number of useful media-related services on campus, such as Information Technology and Innovation Teaching and Training Centers. Besides, students can get advice from an experienced instructor in the departments of communication and culture; arts, telecommunications, theater and drama, etc.

However, a distinctive feature of the university is the provision of media training for future teachers through the library that directly provides media services, helps learn more about media training and why to develop critical thinking skills, directs strategies and resources to integrate media into curricula. Media Services Center staff (MSC, 2018) advises future educators on how to complete a media task, teaches how to incorporate media into the school’s learning process. In general, understanding the importance of future educators’ media training and the difficulty of incorporating media training into pedagogical practice, the activities of the MSC are organized in the context of 3 media education approaches which are distinguished by scholars D. Kellner and J. Schare (Kellner, Share, 2007, p. 59–69): media arts education approach, media literacy movement approach, critical media literacy approach.

As part of the first approach (teaching to appreciate aesthetic qualities and art through media), the University Library provides guidance, materials to help students express their opinions creatively by producing their own, competitive media product, such as a multimedia presentation, video, photo collage, and more. Furthermore, the Library staff encourage instructors and students to share their completed digital products with the greater academic community.

By implementing the second approach (more general level of media literacy concepts and outcomes), the University Library encourages a diverse use of sources, challenging students to consider the information being conveyed regardless of form (“read” images, sound), and to always consider the authority of a source within course and discipline contexts. Though some are critical of this approach, this level of media literacy is appropriate in many courses. Fundamental media literacy skills are an important foundation for becoming a critical consumer of media. Students should, at minimum, understand how media is used within their discipline contexts (in all forms), how to access relevant media resources, how to analyze information in multiple forms and evaluate its influence.

Realizing that each discipline has its own characteristics and that media tools greatly influence the entire learning process, instructors and librarians encourage students to develop their own critical thinking in the context of their specialization. They can aid in students’ development of critical media literacy skill sets by encouraging critical analysis of how discipline specific issues are represented in the field and mass media. For example, students can be asked to consider the following: Who is conveying this message? What incentive might they have to convey information from this perspective? What language and media tools (text, audio, video, graphics, etc.) are used to convey the message? What audience is this message intended to? How can the media and language of this message confirm or break the available stereotypes? To what extent are these points true or contrary to the facts? What communication strategies and representations could turn real information into fakes?
The results of the students’ collaboration with instructors and librarians, including multimedia projects on various aspects of media education, lesson plans and methodological support are stored in the electronic university repository and are available to the general academic community online.

Baylor University in Texas has the most typical ways of developing future teachers’ media literacy skills. Popular courses among students are: Fundamentals of Public Communication, Speech for Business and Professional Students, Argumentation, Discussion and Debate, Introduction to Mass Communication, Media and Society, International Communication, Gender, Race & Media, Law and Ethics of Journalism. The courses in this list will highlight the importance of not only the message, but also the messenger. They will help students use communication media more effectively and to control better the media’s impact on themselves and others (Communication, 2020).

Not only special media courses are offered for Baylor University students. General courses also include media education elements. For instance, the course “Introduction to Secondary Education” has a set of media training opportunities. First-year students in Pedagogical faculty are required to take this course. At the beginning of the semester, students are introduced to a variety of topics, including adolescent development, assessment, multicultural education, lesson planning, and more. During the theoretical preparation, each student becomes a tutor for two students from a rural high school whose task is to develop students’ reading comprehension skills. The future teacher has to work out a mini-lesson that is considered to be a part of his/her tutoring experience.

As modern children widely use mobile phones, Internet, video games, TV and other digital gadgets, future teachers also have to understand the essence of digital and media literacy. University teachers explain the importance of digital and media competencies to their future colleagues and familiarize them with the key questions to be asked when reading and analyzing various media messages. In this course, Baylor faculty members address the key media literacy concepts and principles. The pedagogical technology involves the following steps. Students watch a short video about school reform and practice by asking who created the message, whose voice was ignored, and more. After practicing in an instructor-led classes, trainee students integrate these questions and concepts into their tutoring activities, that is, teach others critical reading. As a rule, they start with the common exercises (deconstruction of advertising texts, analysis and evaluation of articles from magazines and newspapers). Then they can pass on to acquaint their high school students with the methods of persuasion which are commonly used in media. Finally, they may ask their students to create a media product, such as commercials or a magazine cover for a particular pop star or a well-known athlete, so that they can implement their media skills into practice. To do this, students search and retrieve information from the Internet, asking critical questions.

During the semester, trainee students acquire their own skills in critical perception of information, including various pedagogical issues and curriculum development. In addition to their own study and application of methods of critical analysis and evaluation of information, students acquire the necessary skills of a professional teacher who is ready to work in a diversified school environment.

CONCLUSIONS
The experience of the future teachers’ media training outlined above, it should be noted that the media training of a higher school student, a future teacher, that is carried out by the US universities, is projected for his/her further practical activity. Thus, the elements of such training are: theoretical foundations of media education either separately or within most of disciplines; practice in the audience to consolidate media skills; practice outside the
classroom, in a real school environment with real students; creating a media product. These progressive ideas when used in complex can bring a lot of benefits to Ukrainian educational system, particularly to the process of training future teachers. It is planned that the perspectives of the further research are the examination of how the media training of teachers, including future teachers as well, is performed in the US non-formal education.

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