# DEVELOPING MEDIA LITERACY IN STUDENTS AS A FACTOR IN PREVENTING MEDIA THREATS

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**Annotation:** This article discusses the importance of developing media literacy among the younger generation in the modern educational process, as well as the impact of information flows and information attacks on the consciousness and upbringing of youth in the current era of globalization. The essence and meaning of the concepts of media literacy, information weapon, media education, and media culture are explained.

**Keywords:** Media literacy, information weapon, media education, media culture, global computer networks, information and propaganda materials, software.

**Аннотация:** В данной статье рассматривается важность формирования медиаграмотности у подрастающего поколения в современном образовательном процессе, а также влияние информационных потоков и информационных атак на сознание и воспитание молодежи в эпоху глобализации. Раскрываются сущность и значение таких понятий, как медиаграмотность, информационное оружие, медиаобразование и медиакультура.

**Ключевые слова:** медиаграмотность, информационное оружие, медиаобразование, медиакультура, глобальные компьютерные сети, информационно-пропагандистские материалы, программное обеспечение.

**Information Literacy** – refers to a set of skills and competencies related to selecting, evaluating, processing, and transmitting information. Information literacy recognizes the importance of possessing information, assessing it, and using it ethically.

In modern conditions, new forms, methods, and technologies of informational and psychological influence on individuals, groups, and public consciousness are being actively developed and implemented. Sources, channels, and technologies that can influence human consciousness, psychology, and behavior may include the following: mass media and specialized information and propaganda tools; software designed for the rapid dissemination of information and promotional materials through global computer networks; tools and technologies that unlawfully alter the informational environment in which a person makes decisions; means of creating virtual reality; rumors and legends; subliminal semantic influence tools; and devices for generating acoustic and electromagnetic fields.

**Information Weapons** – are technical means used to exert informational influence on individuals, society, and the state during the process of information confrontation. Theorists distinguish a wide range of measures and tools related to this type of weapon — from disinformation and propaganda to electronic warfare.

Here are some definitions of the concept of an "information weapon" used in academic literature:

- **Information weapon** – a set of specialized software and informational tools designed to defeat the enemy's information resources;

- High-tech means aimed at destroying, distorting, or stealing information masses; obtaining necessary data after breaching security systems; restricting or prohibiting access for unauthorized users; disrupting the operation of technical devices; disabling telecommunication networks and computer systems — all of which serve to undermine or influence the functioning of society and the life-support systems of active states.

Means of overcoming defense systems, as well as tools for disrupting the operation of technical devices and computer systems;

– Technical or software tools designed either to provide unauthorized access to a database or, conversely, to restrict such access; tools that interfere with the normal functioning of hardware and software, and that can disable key elements of a particular state or regional infrastructure.

In some sources, the essence of information weapons is defined as the development of information technologies that allow systems with a higher level of informatization (individuals, public or political groups, states) to control systems with a comparatively lower level of informatization — thereby directing their activities toward the interests of the controlling side under continuous informational supervision.

In our opinion, the most successful definition is the following:

An information weapon is a type of weapon whose main elements include information itself, information technologies (in particular, technologies of informational influence), and information processes used in information warfare.

The function of an information weapon, as vividly expressed by M. A. Bulgakov, is "the devastation in people's minds", which is far more dangerous than economic ruin, because the loss of national and spiritual values leads a nation to decline and the collapse of society.

The objects of information weapons include:

– information-technical and information-analytical systems, each encompassing the individual;

– information resources;

– systems for shaping public consciousness and opinion based on mass media; and finally, one of the main targets of foreign countries' information-psychological influence -the mentality and consciousness of young people, who represent the future of the nation.

In modern scientific literature, the following types of information weapons are distinguished:

– psychotronic ("psychophysical") weapons,

– means of programmatic and mathematical influence on computer functions,

– and information materials themselves.

**Media literacy** is a set of skills that enables people to analyze, evaluate, and create various forms of media and messages. A person with a high level of media literacy can easily recognize which sources.

In order for consumers of mass media to be able to critically analyze what they consume, it is necessary to develop media literacy skills and habits from childhood. These skills include having basic access to mass media, critically analyzing it based on certain concepts, evaluating it on the basis of that analysis, and finally, producing media content themselves. The process of learning these media literacy skills is known as media education.

Media literacy is an integral part of media education. At the same time, its various forms are expanding. Today, as a result of the analysis of media, several related concepts have entered our language — such as media literacy, media education, and media studies. Although these terms are interconnected, in the processes of receiving, selecting, analyzing, and evaluating

media information, along with the concept of media literacy, the notions of media education, media studies, and media culture are also used.

For example:

**Media Education** involves:

- integrating media into the educational curriculum and studying it on an interdisciplinary basis;
- analyzing a "media topic" within the framework of a specific subject;
- developing a critical approach to media through practice and analysis;
- studying its forms, technologies, and methods of information transmission;
- examining media agencies and their social, political, and cultural roles;
- engaging students in working with mass media;
- conducting research activities;
- studying how media influences audiences through language and art.

**Media Studies**, in turn, involves:

- studying media from a theoretical perspective;
- analyzing media comparatively;
- examining its conceptual structure;
- analyzing media texts and the methods of their creation;
- exploring the interrelation between mass communication, cinema, and cultural studies;
- studying the influence of mass media.

**Media literacy** is the study of media, based on the following outcomes of media education, and aims to:

– understand the influence of media on individuals and society;
– comprehend the process of mass communication;
– interpret and analyze media texts;
– understand the context of media;
– create and analyze media texts;
– evaluate and select media content.

Today, media — that is, mass communication channels such as film, theater, various forms of art, cultural sources, and information transmitted through the Internet — exert a certain influence on human consciousness and contribute to shaping and changing a person's worldview. The use of the aforementioned concepts — and the growing interest in media education, media literacy, media criticism, and media studies today — share a common goal: to understand how information is created and disseminated, and to be able to evaluate it by comprehending the nature of information distributed for commercial, political, economic, moral, and cultural purposes.

At the same time, incorporating the fundamentals of media education into the curriculum of every educational institution — and explaining its basic principles to students through interactive methods and various games during the learning process — enables the younger generation to navigate the intense flow of information, select what is necessary, and evaluate it critically. This, in turn, helps strengthen young people's future civic positions and provides a foundation for them to objectively assess global events and make sound decisions.

The main conclusion is that we all live in a world of media and face issues related to media literacy every day. It is therefore very important to teach young people how to behave in such challenging conditions and how to protect themselves.

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