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## **MEDIA LITERACY AS A PART OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING PROGRAM**

Media has become an important part of our everyday lives and can be found everywhere from radio to social media. In their English classrooms, teachers use mass media as a source of information more and more often since Internet sources are more up-to-date in comparison with the existing textbooks. As modern young people cannot imagine their lives without social media, it became one of the key sources of information. However, frequently students find it difficult to choose valid sources for their research projects and our syllabus does not include any media literacy courses.

Since there is a certain lack of knowledge and experience in this field, we consider the study of media literacy and its further implementation in the teaching process extremely important.

According to a survey conducted by a market-research firm GlobalWebIndex in 2014 [4], people in developed countries spend from 7.4 to 9.6 hours a day consuming media on the Internet. And these figures are growing every year. In comparison with traditional media (which are television, radio and print) modern social media are cheaper, faster and cover bigger audience. However, one of the most important distinctive features of social media is the ability to publish user-created content [4]. That means anyone can create a message, change it and share it with any possible reason. Media literacy is about understanding how and why messages are being communicated.

Thus, media literacy is the ability to decode, evaluate, analyze, and produce both print and electronic media [1, p. 79]. It is media literacy that teaches us critical thinking. It shows us the necessity to ask questions, study different viewpoints, and make connections.

Media exerts a significant impact on the way we understand, interpret and act. Media literacy can help our students understand outside influences and empower them to make better decisions. Media literacy will help them understand where information comes from, whose interests may be being served and how to find alternative views.

Ways in which to teach media literacy have been researched by educators in many developed countries and the United States is one of them. They understood the importance of media literacy pedagogy as early as the beginning of 21<sup>st</sup> century and they are successfully implementing media literacy teaching and learning in order to create a twenty-first-century learning environment [5, p. 154].

In order to analyze media messages students need to ask five main questions [2]:

1. Who created the message that is being sent?
2. What techniques were used to attract my attention?
3. How might other people understand or interpret this message differently from me?
4. What points of view and values are included or omitted from this message?
5. Why was this message sent?

It is also worth noting that students do not need to read the whole article in order to answer the above mentioned questions. They can practice their skimming and scanning techniques. While skimming is used to understand the main idea of the text and scanning is used when searching for specific information such as names, numbers and dates [3].

In conclusion, we can say that implementing media literacy into “English as a second language” course will be beneficial for Ukrainian students in numerous ways. Together with its main idea to teach how to separate facts from fiction, how to choose credible sources and distinguish propaganda, media literacy can develop critical thinking, social awareness and decision making.

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