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**EDUCATIONAL MEDIA PROJECTS IN INFORMATION
ENVIRONMENT OF THE UNIVERSITY**

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Abstract

The article focuses on the role of media projects in journalistic education. Today, theory alone is no longer enough to form media literacy - it is necessary to gain practical skills in the development and production of media products in various formats. To this end, Department of Journalism of Novgorod State University implements a series of educational media projects within the framework of the disciplines “Media Technology: Newspaper Production” and “Plot Editing: Theory and Practice”. They are based on the principle of project based learning: students learn to generate ideas and implement them, obtaining a specific result. Under the guidance of a teacher-mentor students develop the concept of educational newspaper, select the topics of publications, develop the system of columns, proofread the release, and discuss the results on the final briefing. In addition, students shoot and mount videos about topics relevant for youth: about events taking place at the university, about student life, about hobbies and internships. The continuous inclusion of students in the process of development and production of media projects of various formats allows forming in students professionally significant competences and developing a steady interest in journalism. The article shows effective mechanisms for introducing project based learning in journalistic education and emphasizes that projects should be specialized, in the chosen specialty, i.e. journalists should be engaged in journalism, doctors - in medicine, etc. Only in this case will it be possible to achieve the necessary result and avoid complaints from teaching staff, parents and students themselves.

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Keywords: Internet project, journalism, media project, newspaper production, video release



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1. Introduction

Some Russian universities are actively introducing an innovative educational track – project based learning.

Project based learning implies the involvement of students, starting with the first years of study, in the practical implementation of the theoretical knowledge.

A project is a time-limited activity, presented in the form of events, aimed at solving a socially significant problem and achieving a specific aim, implying the achievement of expected results by solving aim-related tasks, provided with the necessary resources and managed on the basis of constant monitoring of the activity and its results taking into account possible risks. (Yakovleva, 2014, p. 14)

2. Problem Statement

The introduction of project based learning at universities is often faced with resistance from the teaching staff, parents and students. Traditional teaching methods seem more proven, reliable, fundamental, moreover, the number of hours for the projects development increases due to the reduction of hours allocated to the study of professionally relevant disciplines. Therefore, it seems obvious that the introduction of project based learning can be fruitful only in the creative areas of education.

Media educational practices and project activities related to them are actively being studied in the modern research environment:

- The works by V. Pak on methods for the development of general project skills, on the appropriateness of the formation of such skills and his methodological recommendations for organizing educational activities in this vein are of interest (Pak, 2018).
- The anthropological characteristics of educational design as a way of human life activity in education are considered by Malkova and Kiselyova (2011).
- Effectiveness of pedagogical methods of project as an educational technology is also proved in the works of Rozhdestvenskaia and Zhavoronok (2018).
- A brief review of the history of the emergence and development of the project method of teaching is given by Kazun and Pastukhova (2018).
- Distance learning based on the Moodle web application is becoming increasingly important in the modern educational process - Yu. Krasavina reveals the advantages of the electronic project method in her publications (Krasavina & Al Akkad, 2014).
- The theory of media education is presented in (Fateeva, 2007; Fedorov, 2009).

In our study and in our regular practical work in the framework of the courses “Media Technology: Newspaper Production” and “Plot Editing: Theory and Practice”, we also relied on the works of foreign authors, for example, Kaun (2014), Orlik (2014), McLuhan (1962).

3. Research Questions

3.1. What is the effectiveness of including students in the development and release of media products of various formats?

3.2. How effective are educational media projects?

3.3. What are the prospects for project-based learning at a university?

4. Purpose of the Study

To identify the role of media projects in media education and consider effective algorithms for organizing students' work in the projects development.

5. Research Methods

The methodological basis of this article is functional and structural analysis, the analysis of the research works of Russian and foreign scientists, in addition, empirical methods, for example, observation, played a significant role in the study.

6. Findings

Project based learning at the Department of Journalism of NovSU.

6.1. Production of educational newspaper

For 5 years, work on media projects has been carried out at the Department of Journalism of NovSU. As part of the discipline "Media Technology (Newspaper Production)", students, under the guidance of a teacher, are working on the release of the *Antonovka* educational newspaper.

The study of this discipline does not imply the presence of entry requirements - students master it in the first year, therefore it is based on the knowledge and skills acquired by students at secondary school.

The main aim of the discipline is the formation of students' professional competence in the field of the latest technical and technological processes of modern print media production. The first part of the course consists of theory - students study the specifics of work in the print media and the main stages of a newspaper issue production.

But this theoretical foundation will not have the desired effect if the student does not visit the editorial office and sees with his/her own eyes how the work is organized there. Therefore, to add a practical, visual aspect to theory, the teacher organizes study trips to the editorial offices of the city and regional print media, where students have the opportunity not only to see the production process from the inside, but also to communicate with employees and ask questions to the editor-in-chief

After that, students begin to translate the theory into reality - the issue of the educational newspaper begins, which includes the following steps.

Distribution of roles - job responsibilities among students. This is the editor-in-chief, deputy editor, executive secretary, designer, photojournalist, correspondents, and proofreaders. Sometimes difficulties

arise even at this stage - few agree to the position of correspondent - most want to take leadership positions, unreasonably assuming that in this case they will only need to coordinate work, absolutely not working with texts. Naturally, this is a false stereotype. Therefore, at this stage, the teacher should debunk this stereotype and explain to students that the editor-in-chief and the deputy editor not only manage the team and control the deadlines for submission of materials, but also read out each text, send it to the authors for revision, or simply do not allow its publication - very often this is the reason for conflicts that the teacher should stop in time. Bakanov (2017) expressed this idea precisely,

If the correspondent is only responsible for the text and compliance with the deadlines for submitting the text to the editor, the editor-in-chief with his assistant (or deputy) is responsible for meeting the deadlines for the production cycle of preparing the entire educational media issue, including the regular and prompt filling of the media site with this content. If there is awareness of this, then let them forget about a quiet life: from now on they will have to “get out” their classmates and ask them for reports on future publications work. That’s why the editor must be a person who can lead the entire editorial team, hold several training sessions, formulate the concept of the future issue, see the topics of future publications, ask each correspondent about the progress of work on a particular material, discuss with them the structure and genres of the created media texts. (p. 40)

Definition of the concept, topics, significant informational occasions for publications and headings, and network planning (charts with deadlines for materials, genres, number of characters, authors). To increase creative competition, the teacher divides the student group into two subgroups: in the first one, students are making the traditional *Antonovka*; the second group makes an alternative educational newspaper. As practice shows, it is much more interesting for students to work over an alternative newspaper - if *Antonovka* already has a certain editorial policy, a concept, a heading system, the students who start working over an alternative newspaper begin from scratch - they come up with a title, logo, slogan, develop a concept, design.

Collecting information by correspondents. At this stage, it is important to correctly identify the sources of information - often they are rumors, gossips, words of mouth, so the teacher needs to focus on the reliability of the information, on the verification of the sources.

Now the time has come when it is important for every person not so much to consume, as to filter and sift unnecessary and even harmful information for an individual and his/her family. This is especially necessary for present-day schoolchildren and students, who often cannot (possibly do not want to) distinguish fake messages from reliable ones. Such informational infantilism can lead young people to consume data disseminated by banned associations with negative goals, and perhaps support their ideology. In this case both the students themselves and adults - parents and teachers - should be careful. (Bakanov, 2017, p. 42)

The implementation of the plan. Students in the “fields”. They attend events defined on the planning meeting, photograph key moments, talk with experts and events participants, and then write text based on

the material received. Here problems of a disciplinary nature - not everyone sends materials on time, some refuse to interact with the editor and do not respond to his/her comments, and some stop coming to classes. As experience shows, such problems arise because some students begin their studies at the Department of Journalism, having absolutely no experience in writing media texts - after all, having a creative portfolio is an optional admission condition. Therefore, the active participation of the teacher, especially at this stage, is very significant, sometimes the teacher has to assume the duties of the editor-in-chief and apply disciplinary measures in the form of reducing points to students who disrupt the deadlines. For a collective discussion of problems, a special conversation is created on social networks, in the Trello mobile application, students create boards, lists and cards with texts, organizing them and prioritizing them. In addition, Trello allows all participants to see at what stage the work is and how many texts are already ready.

When all the materials are collected, the layout of the strips in the computer program Adobe InDesign begins. It should be noted that several years ago one student from the group was typesetting a newspaper, it used to be the editor-in-chief, but such work, when one person takes on a lot of responsibilities and the rest do not even imagine what the layout program looks like, cannot be productive, therefore, it was decided to provide an opportunity for each student to make up a strip with his/her own material. At this stage, it is important for each strip to be in accordance with the layout of the entire issue, developed by the student-designer together with the executive secretary. When everyone wants to make up their own way, the issue turns out to be chaotic - it is necessary to observe uniformity in the design of illustrations, headings, fonts.

The process of issuing an educational newspaper at the Department of Journalism usually takes one month, during the semester students make four issues. After the issue is printed, a briefing is always held, on which the teacher analyzes each text, and students voice their impressions and wishes.

6.2. Video editing

Meeting the challenges of the time, in 2017 the Department of Journalism of NovSU developed a new training course "Plot editing: theory and practice", during the study students shoot and edit videos for the new departmental Internet project "IGUM Video Workshop", which is planned to be placed in the official group of the Humanities Institute of NovSU on the VK social network and on YouTube video hosting.

As a part of this course, students learn not to be afraid of the camera - the most important problem at the very beginning of the study of this discipline is the students' refusal to record stand-ups because of shyness and flaws in speech. Therefore, before sending students to shoot "in the fields", the teacher explains the basics of oratory to them: in preparing the voice-over text, they learn to pronounce it aloud several times, changing intonation, tempo, rhythm. In addition, in the classroom, students work on voice production, perform articulation exercises. "Work on errors" is very useful: search for errors or inaccuracies in others students' texts, their correction.

The significance of the speech technique for the television journalist is emphasized by many researchers:

A journalist who works in front of a microphone in the studio or directly from the scene is not required to demonstrate a special acting talent in order to gain the favor of the audience. She/he must “bribe” the listener and the audience with her/his skill, and not only with the performer’s skill, but also with skillful work in the frame and in front of the microphone, the perfect technique of spoken language, first of all, the relevance of the topic, individually highlighted on the air. (Malikova & Makulbekov, 2019, p. 442).

In general, the algorithm of students’ work on videos within the framework of the course consists of the following steps:

- defining the target audience (since the priority topics are events from the life of NovSU, the IGUM NovSU is the priority; the target audience are students, school leavers, teachers, NovSU alumni);
- wording of topics, the search for significant informational occasions, gathering information on the topic;
- writing a synopsis - an approximate scenario of a future plot: shooting locations, special conditions, the presence of synchronisms, stand-ups, timing;
- shooting the plot in pairs - one correspondent, one cameraman;
- recording the voice-over text, editing the plot in the program for non-linear video editing Pinnacle Studio.

The study of the course is problematic without visiting the editorial office; therefore, students go to study trips to regional TV-station, where they get acquainted with the editors, editors of TV news programs, presenters.

In the project work, the role of teacher-mentor is very important – a teacher should not stand aside and play only the role of a guard, a supervisor, a teacher should coordinate the work of students in time, resolve disputes, avoid conflicts (youthful maximalism often interferes with work on the project), be able to make a point on time, but do not forget to praise, encouraging activity and creativity.

The teacher is required to work individually, personally and continuously with each student in the study group, to give personal advice and help, not limited to the schedule of one class per week. There are no days off in the creative work. (Bakanov, 2017, p. 45)

7. Conclusion

Project based learning in journalism education help students:

- learn to generate creative ideas;
- create and manage their own media products;
- work in a team;
- create meaningful content: from writing texts in different genres to filming and editing plots;

- put into practice the knowledge and skills gained in theoretical courses, starting from how to come up with the idea of an effective media project to its implementation;
- analyze media projects; critically evaluate their own texts and videos.

Nevertheless, in the development and implementation of student media projects, the following difficulties arise:

- insufficient for project activities technical equipment of the university (lack of computers, software);
- lack of students' motivation for project activities;
- in the group only 2-3 people are actively involved (only several people work - the rest "sit out").

Of great importance is the fact that the authors of the student newspapers and plots examined by us are at the same time the target audience of these projects, which greatly simplifies the development of the concept and the content-thematic model of such media products.

The analyzed media projects possess not only educational, but also PR potential for the university. Both in the educational newspaper and in the stories of the student video workshop, the university-related content prevails: the students talk about significant events, interesting people, educational trajectories of their alma mater, which is especially important on the eve of the admission campaign.

Thus, student media projects allow students to gain media competencies, communication skills, and their content forms the university's information environment. Educational projects allow students to take an active life stand, which will be useful to them in their professional activities.

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