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Russian Media Educators: Case Studies Portraits

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Abstract. This article is devoted to case studies of the media education works of some well knowns Russian media educators. The analysis of media educational work of the famous Russian media educators leads us to the conclusion that media education in Russia is developing, building on the synthesis of the aesthetic, socio-cultural, and practical concepts, with a focus on the development of media competence of the audience, mainly school and youth. The enthusiasts of media education, even devoid of substantial public support for its innovative projects, achieve significant and meaningful results.

Keywords: Russia; media educators; media literacy education; media competence; schools; teachers.

Introduction.

Many media education projects are realized in Russia. A network of school mediathekas (libraries containing books, journals, audio and video cassettes, CDs, DVDs, etc.) has been created in recent years, and a number of most interesting creative network projects for schoolchildren have been launched — these directions are guided by Y. Yastrebtseva. Her colleagues, L. Bazhenova and Y. Bondarenko, aim their efforts at promoting media educational work in Moscow schools. During the lessons, play activities are often used (especially with younger children), students perform creative tasks (making a short video film, a photo collage, etc.), and have collective discussions of media texts. Similar work is going on in schools and universities of other Russian cities — Tver, Voronezh, Samara, Perm, Chelyabinsk, Rostov, Taganrog, Tambov, Krasnodar, Yekaterinburg, Volgodonsk... For example, the recognizable symbol of media education in Voronezh is the Student Film and Video Club, where participants come to discuss especially significant or problem films — the club was led by S. Penzin (1932-2011), an art critic and assistant professor of the Voronezh State University. Professor G. Polichko from the State University of Management is the initiator of annual media educational festivals for schoolchildren — with master classes, talks given by well-known figures of media culture, and collective discussions... Such festivals have taken place for about 10 years in different Russian cities.

This article is devoted to case studies of the media education works of some well knowns Russian media educators.

Case of Stal Penzin

Dr. Stal Penzin (1932-2011) has devoted about three decades of his life to film education. He was born in the family of the known Voronezh artist. After graduating from university (1955) he continued the post-graduate studied in the Russian Institute of Cinematography (VGIK). He defended the Ph.D. thesis in 1968 and worked in Voronezh State University, Voronezh Institute of Arts and in Voronezh Pedagogical Institute. Still in the 60s he organized a youth film club, and very soon joined the recognized leaders of film education movement in Russia.

Quite naturally Dr. Penzin's pedagogical views changed over the time. The influence of ideological clichés, traditional for the communist epoch could be found in his early books written in the 70s. However later he refused the ideological influence and became an active advocate of film education based on *art house*. "The only way to enter the world of the serious, genuine cinema is to love it - wrote S.Penzin. - But one can only love something real, something familiar. (...) Therefore

it is necessary to help students to get to know good films. Those who will grow fond of it, will seek to see more good films, will be interested to learn about their authors, the history of cinema" (Penzin, 1987, p. 4).

S. Penzin accumulated his theoretic knowledge and practical film education experience in the text of his monograph "Cinema as a Tool of Education of Youth" (1973), where he asserted that "cinema is a valuable instrument for a teacher not only as one of the best tools of a snapshot and representation of reality, but also as a way to develop understanding of it" (Penzin, 1973, p.8), comprehension of the historical development of the world and human consciousness. "The primary factor uniting aims of education and cinema, - wrote S. Penzin, - is the common recipient - personality" (Penzin, 1973, p.8), but "the teacher should be careful about self righteous assertion, not to find himself in the position of a "boss", while it is necessary to provide a free space for independent activity of students" (Penzin, 1973, p. 19). In the curriculum of his film course S. Penzin included such themes, as "The process of film creation", "Cinema classification", "Expressive means of cinematograph", "Cinema in education".

However neither the course syllabus nor the monograph contained a coherent and comprehensive system of film education at higher education level. He occasionally expressed severe criticism of entertainment films, so popular with young audiences: "a teacher should encourage students' negative attitude to such film production, declare war and fight to the end") (Penzin, 1973, p.70).

S. Penzin considered a students' film club as an effective form of media education in secondary schools and universities. Ideally it should involve producers (film screenings, film festivals, exhibitions, conferences with the director and film crew, field trips, etc.); film critics (newspapers, film reviews, correspondence with film directors and actors, lectures, conversations, museum of cinema, conferences, discussions of films; film-sociologists (surveys, tests); film/TV studio (production of films/ TV programs) (Penzin, 1973, p.143).

Soon S. Penzin published his second book, "Cinema – is the educator of youth" that, as a matter of fact, was a concise, clearly written reference book and told pupils or students about the types, genres and the language of screen arts, "the tenth muse" core terminology. "Our conversations about cinema, - wrote S.Penzin, - try to convince without enforcement. Select any letter, any term depending on your mood. Our objective is not to cover all problems, but to teach how to learn the basics of film art" (Penzin, 1975, p.6).

In 1984 S. Penzin offered the readers another monograph- "Cinema in the System of Arts: a Problem of the Author and the Character", that touched upon the concepts "the author's film world", "synthetic nature of the film art", "art and a person", and others at a more complex level. As a passionate proponent of the *auteur theory*, S.Penzin believed that film education should be based on films by A.Tarkovsky, F.Fellini or I.Bergman. The monograph belonged to Film Studies rather than field of Education. Yet the book "Lessons of Cinema", published two years later was directly aimed at teachers and parents and explained how films about childhood and youth can help in the difficult process of education.

The arrangement of content of the book was captivating. S. Penzin used contemporary Russian films for youth ("Hundred Days after Childhood", "Lifeguard", "Guys") as "case studies" and convincingly proved that "film authors are the teachers, they teach lessons - lessons of cinema» (5, p.64). Stal Penzin brought readers' attention to the fact that almost all serious directors one way or another address the theme of childhood in their works– "the morning of life", as artists feel the strong necessity to return to the starting place of developing the world outlook, to compare the world of one's own childhood to the world of a new generation, thus assisting the socialization of young people. "Sooner or later a teenager faces a free choice, with neither caring parents nor teachers nearby. Art prepares a person for self-reliant actions." (5, p. 65)

Dr. Penzin did not reduce the potential of cinema to education only. He attracted the attention of his readers to other functions of the screen (cognitive, aesthetic, communicative, game etc.). The target audience of the book was not only those who teach, but also those who learn. S. Penzin hoped that a teenager after having read "Lessons of Cinema", would reflect on life and cinema, would remember that cinema is not only entertaining films about cowboys and spies, pretty girls and comics. They would be aware that there is also the auteur's world with an open and sincere conversation about history and modern life, difficult fates and interesting personalities. As before S. Penzin was sure that film education should be built on the best examples and film

studies should make a wall between "bad films" and the audience S. Penzin's pedagogical vision is reflected in his book "Cinema and Aesthetic Education: Methodological Problems" (1987). This was perhaps the first book in Russian academic literature that analyzed the subject, aim and objectives, principles and methods, film education curriculum, organization of a film club. He wrote: "Not everyone recognizes the necessity of film education, the reasons of the opponents being usually one or all of the following: 1. A true work of art is comprehensible for everyone. Therefore a good film does not require any "intermediaries", anyone can understand it. 2. There is enough film advertising and promotion. 3. A person who studies literature in school will automatically be literate in cinema. 4. Cinema is not a "true" art yet: its history is not so long, there is no "classical works" which value is proved by centuries, like masterpieces of literature, theatre, and painting. 5. The results of Literature studies do not correspond to the efforts spent; there is no point in repeating this sad experience with another medium. 6. Today there are no conditions (teachers, film libraries, etc.) for introduction of film education at schools and universities. 7. Art creativity belongs to emotional sphere, and knowledge to rational one. The less a person knows about art, the better he is as a viewer- recipient. The conclusion is clear: film education is harmful, not beneficial" (6, p. 31). Further in the book, S.Penzin consistently refuted all of the above arguments and proved that film education is, in the first place, one of the directions of aesthetic education. The subject matter of film education is interpreted as the system of knowledge and skills necessary for the quality perception of screen art, development of audience's culture, creative abilities (6, p.43).

S. Penzin anticipated the questions that are likely to be asked about film education (Penzin, 1987, p. 44): film education – what is it for? To develop the course participants' knowledge about films? Or to develop audience's abilities and critical thinking? Should the curriculum include the theory and history of cinema? Or should it be centered on the distinguished works of film art? Last but not least, what should the teaching strategies be? Same as in Film Departments or different?

In Stal Penzin's opinion, depending on the way a teacher answers these questions, it is possible to divide film education in Russia in two directions "extensive" (covering art culture on the whole, where Film Studies occupy the same volume of space in the curriculum as, for example, Literature) and "intensive" (specifically focused on film and therefore resembling an abridged course of Film Studies for future professionals in media field). Yet S. Penzin emphasized again that film education is part of the aesthetic development of a person, therefore should develop aesthetic feelings, ideals, and viewpoints. "Even the "intensive" film education should not be "narrow" and be reduced to teaching visual literacy; classes should embrace film aesthetics with ethics" (Penzin, 1987, p.45).

As stated by S. Penzin, the content of film education should include: "a) the basics of aesthetics, film history and theory, any pictures to develop the quality aesthetic perception of any film; b) the information on main areas of application of theoretical knowledge; c) information on challenging problems in the subject matter; d) assignments that develop students' skills to analyze film texts" (Penzin, 1987, p.46). In this case the immediate objective of film education is to "encourage the aesthetic perception of films". And the long- term objective is "the development of the personality through film art" (Penzin, 1987, p.46). Consequently, a person should have the following general aesthetic qualities (good aesthetic taste; unbiased perception of media; abstract thinking; acknowledgement of cinema as Art, not a mirror reflection of life; awareness of the importance of film education) and special ones (demand for serious art house films, ability to select and understand films, interest in the history of cinema, etc.) (Penzin, 1987, p.46-47).

Further the aim of film education was specified in objectives: 1) *education*, i.e. knowledge development (resulting in the awareness of the importance of film studies; skills to analyze all the elements of a film, to interpret a film message; being selective about the choice of a film to watch); 2) *learning*, i.e. critical thinking development, etc.; 3) *personal growth*, resulting in the development of such qualities, as good aesthetic taste, desire to communicate with "serious works of art" (Penzin, 1987, p. 47-48). According to S. Penzin the development of the latter can and should be fostered through the pre-viewing activities, after-viewing explanations, creative projects, club activities.

Essentially many of the above aims and objectives seem to be disputable especially for media educators in other countries. For example, Len Masterman, as it is well known, absolutely rejects the possibility of the development of aesthetic taste at media lessons, as well as the separation of

films into "good" and "bad", considering that it is virtually impossible to prove to the pupils/students the high or low quality of a film.

Yet S. Penzin is a committed supporter not only of the "aesthetic approach" in media education, but also ethical. "Film education cannot be brought down to specific - aesthetic and film studies objectives, a viewer should be, first of all, a Person, an ethical person ("homo eticus") (Penzin, 1987, p.47). For these reasons, Penzin distinguishes between the following levels of aesthetic culture of a person: 1) high, or optimal, characterized by a wide art erudition, advanced abilities and interests, fundamental knowledge; 2) average, which is characterized by the unbalanced development of main components of the previous level; 3) low: aesthetic illiteracy (Penzin, 1987, p. 77).

Adapting traditional didactic tenets, S. Penzin chose the following principles of education: 1) education and all-round development in the learning process; 2) scientific character and intelligibility of teaching; 3) systematic character and link of the theory with practice; 4) active learning; 5) visual expression; 6) transition from education to self- education; 7) connection of learning to life; 8) lasting knowledge; 9) positive emotional background, recognizing interests and characteristics of a class and an individual (Penzin, 1987, p. 59). To these nine, S. Penzin added three more principles: 10) film studies as part of the system of arts, 11) the unity of rational and emotional components in aesthetic perception of films; 12) bi-functional aesthetic self-education, when the aesthetic feeling clarifies the ethical (Penzin, 1987, p. 71). Consequently teaching the analysis of a film (as a work of art) has three aims. The first one is "the understanding of the author's position, studying everything that is directly connected to the author – the main medium of film aesthetics. The second aim is to comprehend the hero - main medium of an aesthetic beginning. The third task is the junction, synthesis of the previous concepts. (...) All three tasks are indivisible; they arise and demand the solutions simultaneously" (Penzin, 1987, p. 56). As for the methods of film education S.Penzin recommended reproductive, heuristic and research methods of teaching and learning.

S. Penzin became one of the first Russian media educators to try to summarize the experience of film education (the analysis of textbooks, curricula, practical approaches) in Russian schools and universities and the film club movement. Being one of the most enthusiastic leaders of film-clubs, S. Penzin considered that the specific feature of a film club is that it performs numerous functions: "the foremost of these interrelated functions are: 1) film education (function: after- school program); 2) propaganda of film art (function: advertising); 3) screening and discussion of "difficult" (art house) films (function: art house film theatre; 4) film reviews (function: film critic); 5) surveys (function: sociologist); 6) communication (function: meeting point and the recreation centre" (Penzin, 1987, p.126-127). Taking into account these functions, S. Penzin created several models of film club movement, each focusing on one or several functions – e.g., to provide space for different kinds of audiences, after- school program or a university association of cineastes (Penzin, 1987, p. 137).

S. Penzin marked the distinction of media education in clubs from media education in school/university: heterogeneity of participants (age, experience, motivation to participate in the club, education, moral values, knowledge in the field of art); and a more specific, compared to school pupils, stance of the audience (Penzin, 1987, p. 135).

S. Penzin met the emergence of video technology with great enthusiasm and took advantage of a rather short interval of time (the end of the 80s – the first half of the 90s), when VCRs did not yet become the common appliance in households of Russia. It was during these years that the audience of video clubs in Russia increased sharply because people wanted to see those films that until then had been banned by the censorship. S. Penzin noted the following benefits for film education: independence from the official film distribution; possibility of recording and non-commercial use of any films, programs or their sequences; using techniques *freeze frame, stepframe* and others; video production in school or university; collection of videos (Penzin, 1993, p. 95).

Many of S. Penzin's former students became media educators. For example, Galina Evtushenko is one of his adherents. Having graduated from Voronezh University (1978) she taught in schools, film courses and film clubs. Later she wrote the Ph.D thesis on film education in Moscow Institute of Cinematography (1991) and then taught film education for future professionals. After that she worked as a film director herself. Her very first educational five-

minute documentary "I've seen you somewhere" got attention of critics and colleagues. Today G. Evtushenko is one of the best known Russian film documentary directors. She is the unique embodiment of successful re- training: from a media teacher to a film director (while the reverse process is more common).

Last years of his life S. Penzin was media educator at Voronezh State University, and Pedagogical University and Voronezh Film and Video Center. S. Penzin developed a number of university curricula (Penzin, 1998, 2000, etc.) that integrate film education with a major field of study of university students. The contribution of S. Penzin's pedagogy - both theoretical and practical - is difficult for overestimate. His input in Russian media education is very significant and once again proves that educational innovations are not only the capital's prerogative.

Case of July Rabinovich, Alexander Spichkin, Gennady Polichko and others Kurgan media educators

Media education in Kurgan (at Kurgan State Pedagogical University, Kurgan State University, Kurgan Institute of Teachers' Professional Development) has firm traditions due to activity of such educators, as July Rabinovich (1918-1990), Alexander Spichkin (1948-2002), Gennady Polichko, Svetlana Odintsova, Natalia Legotina, and many others.

Along with "Moscow school" of Yury Usov (1936-2000) one of the most important places in history of Russian media education is occupied by the so-called "Kurgan school", headed for a long time by professor Yuly Rabinovich (1918-1990). Rabinovich was one of leaders and pioneers of Russian media education. For about thirty years not only he was actively engaged in film education of school pupils and students, but also trained the new generation of media educators, many of whom (S. Odintsova, G. Polichko, A. Spichkin, etc.) successfully defended Ph.D. dissertations on media education.

Since 1961 Y. Rabinovich began to introduce media education on a material of screen arts in Kurgan Pedagogical Institute (within the framework of a student film-club, special courses at History and Philology departments). Communicating with students, Y. Rabinovich saw "the declining interest for books, replaced by cinema, TV, and later - pop music". This process disturbed him as the teacher of Language Arts, and he directed his research towards the integration of film studies with literature courses (Rabinovich, 1991, p.6). At the beginning of the sixties Y. Rabinovich published a number of articles on the problems of film education. These and other works became a basis for the serious academic research. In 1966 Y. Rabinovich received his Ph.D. degree in Moscow - his dissertation was the first one in Russia on film education (Rabinovich, 1966). "Kurgan school" of film education began to develop.

In early 1960s Russian media educators (in Kurgan, Armavir, Tver and other cities) worked as a matter of fact autonomously; were not aware of the experience of the colleagues. "At the beginning, we had to, - writes Y. Rabinovich, - to act as film critics, sociologists, theorists and practitioners" (Rabinovich, 1991, p.58). The magazine "Cinema Art" published the open letter to the President of Russian Academy of Pedagogical Sciences. "The President wrote a response. These materials have caused the wide discussion. The magazine provided the space for "the round table" where teachers, education policy makers, and cinematographers participated. (...) Teachers highlighted the question of teaching materials and strategies for film education, (...) made a sound suggestion to offer a course on theory and history of cinema at pedagogical universities» (Rabinovich, 1997, p.7-8). To tell the truth, some participants of the round table objected to proposed innovations, justifying their opposition by the overload school and university curricula, and intensive existing courses of literature. Y. Rabinovich however argued, and persuasively proved, that studying film art does not hamper educational process, but, on the contrary, facilitates it.

In 1971 Y. Rabinovich organized a teacher training course in Kurgan Pedagogical Institute. The course covered correlation of literature and cinema (Rabinovich, 1997, p.9). The syllabus included such topics as "Cinema as Art", " Film Genres", "Expressive Means of Screen Arts", "Film Representation", "Screen Plays", "War Films", "School Films", "Children and Educational Films", "Moral Values in Films", "Documentary Films", "Film Education in School", etc.

Students learnt to analyze films, to write film reviews. Besides the training got within the classroom, they could expand their knowledge, and practice new skills at the film club. Unlike many Russian media educators (I. Levshina, R. Guzman, etc.), Y. Rabinovich believed that film

education of students should begin with the history of motion picture arts as "the historical approach is always important while studying any art, and cinema is not an exception" (Rabinovich, 1991, p. 78). He also argued that studying film classics assists the better understanding of the film language.

As I. Levshina justly notices, there was no other college of education in Russia that constantly and consistently sent teachers of literature to remote rural schools, offered quality film courses and integrated screen art with literature courses" (Levshina, 1978, p. 14).

By the early 1970s Y. Rabinovich developed the following principles for future teachers training: 1) introduction to the basics of motion picture arts, the theory of cinema; 2) application of knowledge related to the theory of literature for studying film; 3) development of a technique of the comparative analysis of a film and a literary work; skills to analyse the screen adaptation; development of the students' interest in reading through their interest in cinema; and so on (Rabinovich, 1997, p. 13).

"Kurgan school" of film education affected not only schools and higher education institutions, but also the regional Institute of Teachers' Professional Development. The seminar on film education gathered the audience of 150-200 people annually, and its modules included lectures on the theory and history of motion picture arts, training in methods of film education, and discussion of films. The similar course "Book and Film" was organized in 1983 by the Kurgan Library Society. The syllabus of the course developed by Y. Rabinovich included:

1) Birth of cinema. Fiction as one of sources of cinema (a theme, a plot, visual imagery, perception);

2) The role of the word;

3) The word as the basis of literature;

4) The word and the image in a modern film, dominating role of a picture;

5) Montage in literature and in motion picture;

6) The devices of the cinematic representation of "human soul dialectics", a concealed world of a person;

7) Different means of representation of the same objects or events in film and literature;

8) Codes of screen adaptation of literature. Creative interpretation of a novel or a story;

9) Teaching strategies for using screen adaptations in school literature courses. Types of essays, film reviews;

10) Seminars, practical activities, screenings of some significant films based on the Russian classics;

11) Screen adaptation as one of means of modern "reading" a well- known literary work;

12) Feature films in class and out of class work. Interaction of literature, cinema and TV in aesthetic education of modern students (Rabinovich, 1991, p.96-97).

Pedagogical views of Y. Rabinovich reflected the aesthetic theory of media education based on the synthesis of literature and cinema art. Being a practionist as well as a researcher, he was aware of the serious problems that Russian film education faced: lack of financial and technical resources in schools, shortage of quality audiovisual material, absence of effective support at the national level of the Ministry of Education, inertness of bureaucratic thinking on the part of policy makers, editors of pedagogical publishing houses or magazines, and so on. In the 1980s Y. Rabinovich drew a paradoxical (at first sight) conclusion: mass expansion of film education in Kurgan area did not achieve significant results: "recurrence of the same teaching patterns (lecture, quiz, practice, home assignment) proved to be uncreative. Pupils' enthusiasm about cinema decreased. The elective classes did not develop the culture of the perception of art. Lessons and assignments replaced the development of a deeply emotional relation to film, aspiration to enjoy it as a work of art (Rabinovich, 1991, p.101-102). In fact, extensive film education propaganda in Kurgan area resulted in a sad phenomenon- some teachers engaged in film education under pressure, without enthusiasm and love for cinema art. Thus the created effect was similar to literature courses in schools: teachers and pupils started to treat film in classroom as another boring duty...

Moreover, the social and cultural situation in the country has changed dramatically; since the second half of the 1980s films (including foreign production) were no longer deficit. Television, video, Internet delivered households streams of various screen production. The most active part of the audience- school pupils and students appeared to be oversaturated with the audiovisual

information. Russian media education called for the revision of many firm methodological and methodical approaches.

The most influential representatives of Kurgan school film education, besides Y. Rabinovich are S. Odintsova – professor of Kurgan State Pedagogical University; G. Polichko – one of the leaders of the Russian Association for Film & Media Education and A. Spichkin - professor of Kurgan Institute for Teachers' Professional Development.

S. Odintsova received her Ph.D. degree in 1981, after defending her dissertation "The film analysis as one of improvement factors in education of students - philologists in pedagogical institutes". She successfully developed Rabinovich's ideas of the synthesis of literature and film education. She gives special attention to the problem of the film language knowledge of which "is necessary for a dialogue with the film text since the author's concept of the world and the person is embodied in a film-image that consists of the interacting and tied components: changing camera angles, drama action, the moving image, music and sound, word and speech of the characters, light and color tonality, the rhythm of a single shot and the montage of the whole film" (Odintsova, 1997, p. 51). I agree with S. Odintsova's opinion that "the analysis of a film develops a personality and influences the nature of a dialogue with a work of art. It is very important for an audience (...) that the analysis of a film connects and develops figurative and verbal thinking. The film analysis requires and develops imagination because it demands a reconstruction of film image in its tangible sensual form. (...) As for the methodological approach to the analysis of a film we share the opinion of those researchers who consider that the only true principle is the complete analysis of a film - in unity of the form and the content" (Odintsova, 1997, p.52). The moral - aesthetic dimension of S. Odintsova's approach, characteristic of Russian media educators, distinctly stands out: "A modern teacher, - she writes in her article "Film education in a pedagogical institute", - is the defender of moral and aesthetic values. He should resist a powerful stream of pseudo-culture, be open-minded to the new in life and art, clearly differentiate between the good and the bad, the beauty and the ugliness; should contribute to the spiritual revival of the society» (Odintsova, 1993, p. 113).

Another distinguished student of Y. Rabinovich, - G. Polichko also continuously developed ideas of integrating literature and the basics of motion picture arts in educational process of school and university. He received the Ph.D. degree in 1987 with the dissertation on "Cross curricula connections of a Literature course and an elective on film education as means of the aesthetic development of senior pupils". Being a teacher and then the principle in a Kurgan school, G. Polichko ran one of the Kurgan film clubs for a number of years. In 1988 he was elected the Secretary of Russian Association for Film and Media Education and moved to Moscow. There he created a firm *Viking* (at the end of the 1980s) which invested a significant share of its income to various media education projects (conferences, seminars, publications, the Moscow film lyceum, etc.).

One of G. Polichko's successful projects of the time was setting up the two- year Advanced Film Education Course for Teachers. Unfortunately, in the middle of the 1990s the firm *Viking* went bankrupt; subsequently the funding for the film education teachers' courses, conferences and seminars was significantly reduced, many projects were closed.

In his early works G. Polichko used to be a proponent of the system of training traditional for Russian film pedagogy and education, namely, working with art films only. As well as in Y. Rabinovich's works, in G. Polichko's programs we can see the clear aesthetical focus of media education. Comparing Russian and foreign media education tradition, G. Polichko wrote that communication with foreign colleagues has shown, "that it is exactly on this borderline - the presence or the absence of art substance in a media text – that a watershed between the western and our concepts of film education is. We begin from the point where our foreign colleagues stop, - approaching aesthetic, evaluating dialogue of the art content of a film text. The language of cinema and the analysis of how this text is constructed, for Russian film education is only the first step to its perception, then the main thing begins (...) – communication about art. Western (in particular British) system of film education is aimed at different thing. As our English colleague, the film educator from Devon Martin Phillips has said during the seminar in Valuevo, "the evaluation of a film is not a pedagogical problem, it is a problem of an individual choice of a person" (...) At the basis of film educaiton of our English colleagues is the concept of a free personality, which foundation is the full sovereignty of an inner life; and any dialogue concerning the evaluation of the

content of a text, especially art, is an intrusion into the private world of a person, an attempt to impose the "right" interpretation of a media text on him/her" (Polichko, 1993, p.17).

I would like to add to these generally true conclusions that American and European media educators did not give up the aesthetical concept of media education at once. In the 60s many of them were also focused on developing the audience's taste for art and to introduce the best examples of cinema. However a different opinion (promoted by its adherent, the British researcher Len Masterman) gradually started to prevail, asserting that the evaluation of a media text's art value is so subjective (and even film experts have contrary judgements sometimes), that education should not deal with problems of "good" or "bad" aesthetic quality of films, as well as, with judging about "good" or "bad" aesthetic tastes.

The influence of Y. Rabinovich school can be seen in works of other Kurgan teachers. I. Zhukova designed the university special course "The Silver Age of the Russian poetry" integrating film clips. V.Olejnik integrates film education into the course of *World Literature of the XX century* at the pedagogical university.

However the most consecutive supporter of modern models of media education, undoubtedly, became Professor Alexander Spichkin (1948-2002). He got interested in film education while studying in Kurgan Pedagogical Institute, which he graduated from in 1970. After the graduation he continued working in the sphere of his academic interests and in 1986 was awarded the Ph.D. degree. It was he who persuasively rationalized the reasons of fostering the aesthetic approach in Russian film education. He criticized the tendency of many Russian teachers (including Y. Rabinovich) to use in classrooms only art house films, or film classics.

"Film education, - A. Spichkin marked, - was usually part of the general structure of curriculum aimed at the aesthetic development, including other subjects such as Music, Literature, Fine Arts and sometimes (though less often) Drama. The aesthetic approach was, as a matter of fact, the most rewarding under existing conditions because the aesthetic sphere was one of few spheres where, despite of rigid censorship, there was quite substantial degree of intellectual freedom. However very soon some contradictions of the aesthetic approach also came to light. The result was that film education was basically focused on studying film "masterpieces", (...) and on the expert taste; "introduction to the best samples of world motion picture arts" stepped to the foreground as one of the main aims of film education. In practice this phenomenon reflects in a bit different form (relevant to education) the existence of "scissors" between critical judgments of film experts and mass "bad" taste; interests and aesthetic preferences of students become less important for a teacher than his/her own preferences and an "expert" assessment. (...) Mass media and various forms of mass culture were frequently seen as a threat, as some from of inevitable evil, destroying aesthetic tastes of children and teenagers, distracting them from the "high art" (Spichkin, 1997, p.15).

Having briefly outlined forms and ways of the organization of media education abroad, A. Spichkin reasonably believed that with all the distinctions it is possible to find similarities in theoretical and practical approaches. The significant place in western media education is occupied by "the approach to media texts as to a sign system. Thus the aesthetic quality of a text is as though moved outside the brackets, and the central attention is given to the nature of the audiences' perception, ways of nonverbal communication of the information in two basic kinds: nonverbal signals (gestures, facial expression, plastique, expressiveness of speech, intonation), and the nonverbal signals transmitted through technical devices (a camera angle, type of a shot, lightening and colour, composition, camera movement, montage)" (Spichkin, 1997, p.17). In opinion of A. Spichkin, studying these signs develops the audiovisual literacy, which in its turn can form a basis for the advanced aesthetic perception. "Thus, rethinking film education in the context of media education does not mean, that the aesthetic approach, traditional for Russia should be rejected as something out-of-date. It is however necessary to recognize that as any other approach to film education it has some limitations, and that various approaches do not cancel out, but enhance each other» (Spichkin, 1997, p.17-18).

Another important direction in media education according to A. Spichkin is the role and nature of functioning of media in society, development of critical thinking applied to any media text. "The attitude to media education to some extent can serve as an indicator of democratic changes in the country because the transition from passive consumption to the critical analysis of

media and, hence, to an active civic stand depends on (...) the understanding of the role of mass media in society" (Spichkin, 1997, p.19).

In 1999 A. Spichkin published the handbook for teachers (21) in which he developed the ideas of his previous works. The book covered the content, the structure and teaching techniques of media education, its integration with the curriculum (within the courses of Fine Arts and Drama, Literature and World Art Culture, social studies).

Having paid attention to the instability and variability of the basic terminology in modern media education, A. Spichkin drew a conclusion that media may be defined as:

- "Technical means of creation and communication of the information (the technological approach);

- The way of rendition of traditional arts (the aesthetic approach);

- The way of communication, combining various sign systems (the communicative approach);

- Means of the critical perception of information about the events in political and social life (the social approach);

- Teaching and learning material, encouraging the development of the associative, figurative, visual thinking (cognitive approach);

- The method of the development of creative skills (the creative approach)" (Spichkin, 1999, p.6-7).

The analysis of foreign and Russian curricula and handbooks let A.Spichkinu (Spichkin, 1999, p.7-8) distinguish some core units of media education:

- communication of the information in society (concept of communication, sign systems and ways of representation of the information, history of mass media, mass communication and its rules);

- the structure of mass communication (studying of separate types of media and their specific features);

- social functioning of media (control over mass information, media economics, perception of mass information and its influence).

The content of these key units includes:

- the development pupils' knowledge and understanding of history, structure and the theory of media;

- the development of skills of perception of the information contained in media texts;

- the development of applied creative skills related to media.

British media educators (C.Bazalgette, A.Hart, etc.) agree on a more laconic description of these units (key concepts and signpost questions): "*agencies* (who is communicating a media message and why?), *categories* (what type of text is it?), *technologies* (how is it produced?), *languages* (how do we know what it means?), *audiences* ("who receives it and and what sense do they make from it?), and *representations* (how does it present its subject?)" (Hart, Hicks, 2002, p.32). As we see these key concepts may be applied not only to "high art", but to *any* media text, therefore are universal.

Reflecting on the development of media education in the modern world, A. Spichkin tried to put together a "model" media education curriculum. "In many countries there is a special subject, its name structure may vary, but the content is almost the same. The subject matter are the media. (...) In Russia due to the regular growth of prices on books and periodicals, television becomes not only the the most popular, but frequently the only mass medium which is accessible for teenagers and is an integral part of their daily life. Therefore television can be considered as a nucleus in construction of the autonomous media education system (...). The media studies curriculum should include the following basic units:

1) An outline of the history of television. TV and other mass media. Television characteristics – improvisation, documentation, intimacy. Efficiency of the television information, it visual power. The spectator as an eyewitness of events;

2) A person on the television screen (gestures, facial expressions, plastique, expressiveness of speech, intonation and its role; anchor, reporter, etc.);

3) The world through the television screen (a television camera: a mirror or a filter?; the language of the television camera: a camer angle, a shot, composition, light exposure and color; movement, montage);

4) Television program as complex verbal and visual influence on a spectator (types of television programs, programming);

5) Television genres (sitcoms, television series, soap operas, documentary programs, news coverage, educational programs, talk shows, game shows, nature programs, sport programs, advertising, etc.);

6) Television production: from a script to broadcast ("behind the camera" occupations: a script writer, an editor, a director, an assistant director, a producer, a cameraman, a sound producer, etc.);

7) TV and other media – fine art, literature, music, theatre, cinema. Types of television interpretations of traditional arts" (Spichkin, 1999, p,8-11).

At the same time, A.Spichkin pointed out the disadvantages of media studies as an autonomous subject, namely the inadequate qualification of a teacher, and consequently, the risk of a superficial treatment of the subject. His concerns were that if a teacher does not possess a profound and extensive knowledge in the field of TV, and does not believe in practical benefit of such course for his/her pupils, then maybe it is not worthy to teach it in his/her class.

The second model of media education proposed by A. Spichkin is media education across the school curriculum, integrated into traditional disciplines, such as Literature, Art, History, Geography, and other subjects. "As against an autonomous approach, the integrated model in the first place presupposes not so much studying media, how much the products of media - media texts." (Spichkin, 1999, p.13). Yet there is a danger that teachers may reduce media education to the role of media as "teaching aids", teaching *with* and not *about* media, thus neglecting studying of the key media education concepts (agencies, categories, technologies, languages, audiences, representations).

For all these reasons, A. Spichkin offered his model of the "aspect" structure of media education:

- type of coding: verbal / nonverbal; visual / audio/combined;
- type of a text: narration, description, analysis;
- type of an audience: age /gender/social position/ educational level;
- type of values: aesthetic /moral/religious/political;
- social functions of the media text: entertainment/ information/ education/ propaganda (Spichkin, 1999, p.21-24).

A. Spichkin argued that "the aspect approach can be applied to the autonomous model of media education as the pattern of the content arrangement. However its advantages are more obvious in teaching media across the curriculum" (Spichkin, 1999, p.25).

Reasonably believing that efficient media education is only possible with the development of the audiovisual literacy (e.g. skills to decode media texts) of school students, in his book A. Spichkin suggested a number of practical, game activities aimed at the development of skills to see / listen and describe elements of visual and audiovisual texts, to interpret media texts, and to apply the new knowledge and skills to create own media texts (spichkin, 1999, pp.28-34).

Further A. Spichkin described an innovating technique of integration media education into the courses of Art (use of "a shot frame", montage exercises, "Kuleshov's Effect", "Comic strip", "Film Poster", "Collage", etc.), Literature (creating a soundtrack for the literary text, a slide-film on a poem, comparing the original book and its screen adaptations, storyboarding, writing a short script, etc.), Drama, World Art Culture, Social Studies.

As far as the Social Studies are concerned, A. Spichkin thought that the significant part of the media education component of the curriculum should be dedicated to the television news coverage analysis, using the following guiding questions:

1) What stories frequently become news and what are excluded?
2) Why an item is selected for the newscast?
3) Who decides what items to include?
4) How are the news presented?
5) Are newscasts important for the society? (Spichkin, 1999, p.64).

Activities on newspapers include:

- making a radio news coverage based on newspaper articles;
-analysis of several editorial articles printed within a week, separating facts and opinions;
- reading several editorials to define the balance of opinions (What issues does the newspaper support? What issues does it neglect or argues with?);
- evaluating articles using the criteria of balanced reporting (Spichkin, 1999, p.64).

A. Spichkin had many other ideas for media education, but very sadly, a sever illness took away his career and life in 2002…

The experience of Kurgan "media education school" seems quite successful and useful for Russian education. For its forty years of existence Kurgan school has proved - both in theory, and in practice, - that film education and media education on the whole, is an effective means of the development of creative abilities, critical thinking, aesthetic perception of a person.

Case of Alexander Sharikov

Russian media educator Alexander Sharikov, born in 1951, graduated from the Moscow State Pedagogical Institute and continued postgraduate education in the Russian Academy of Education (his Ph.D. dissertation (Sharikov, 1989) was defended in end of 1980s. He worked in the academic Laboratory of Screen Arts in the Institute of Art Education and in the Laboratory of Teaching Aids of the Russian Academy of Education, his articles on problems of media and media education were published in Russian, British and French academic journals. He authored several books devoted to media sociology, media education and media culture and a number of course syllabi on media education. Then he supervised the sociological department of the Russian television company (RTR) and conducted several surveys on television preferences of the audience, etc. Now he is…

Perhaps, A. Sharikov was the first Russian teacher concerned not only with film and press education, but with the problems of media education on the whole. Fluent in English and French he began to study foreign media education in the second half of the 1980s. This research work resulted in the publication "Media Education: International and Russian experience" (Sharikov, 1990).

In his outline of the main directions of media education Dr. Sharikov explained the reasons of emergence of media education, based on the long standing practice of film education. He noted that the term *media education* became known in the 70s and implied "not only art, culture studies and semantic aspects, but also social, psychological and political features of this phenomenon. It turned out that teaching the language of cinema and learning to appreciate film art without understanding of the whole system of sociocultural relationships in the process of communication was obviously not enough for the development of civil qualities. Media education was envisaged as the way to improve this situation" (Sharikov, 1990, p. 6). Media education was aimed at preparing the young generation to live in a new information age, be able to interpret different types of information, understand it, "be aware of possible consequences of media's impact on a person, to learn to communicate on the basis of nonverbal forms of communication with the help of technical devices" (2, p. 6). And the foremost aim of media education became a person's involvement in mass media system, that is the experience of nonverbal perception, studying the language of media, skills to interpret and evaluate the message, etc. (Sharikov, 1990, pp.10-11).

In the historical outline A. Sharikov has shown that many teachers understood media education as "educational technology" – a sort of the traditional course "Technical teaching aids" that has been taught in Russian pedagogical universities for decades. However the focus from teaching and learning *with media* then shifted to *studying media*.

Having analyzed numerous foreign researches, A. Sharikov (Sharikov, 1990, p. 8-10) selected three key concepts of media education: "media literacy" (teaching and learning nonverbal ways of communication, the language of media culture), "information protection" (development of the participants' critical thinking) and "social – pedagogical" (studying social nd political aspects of media influence including problems of the so-called "cultural discrimination" or "cultural imperialism"). Later Russian researches (Fedorov, 2001; Spichkin, 1999) continued the analysis of key concepts of media education around the world. Yet Dr. Sharikov's research was actually the first "media education manifesto" in the Russian pedagogical discourse.

The book also covered two main approaches of the implementation of media education in the educational process- integrated (with traditional subjects) and autonomous (a new course, e.g.

"Media Culture" either mandatory or elective). He also touched upon the issues of interaction between the teacher and pupils, the changing role of a teacher and characterized the teaching strategies in a media classroom:

- "setting up the free, friendly, trustful atmosphere of psychological comfort;
- inherent use of the polysemic character of the information; rejection of the strictly programmed schemes of classes (principle of improvisation);
- legitimacy of multiple variants of interpretation of the information; the recognition of the equality related to the information and its evaluation of all participants of the class, including a teacher;
- focus on issues related to pupils' immediate social and cultural environment, their interests and life experience" (Sharikov, 1990, p.19).

A. Sharikov identified the following methods of media education abroad: "deconstruction" (content-analysis) of media texts, creative activity of pupils (collages, posters, slide/video films, radio/ TV broadcasting, school press, etc.), discussions, simulating games and so on (Sharikov 1990, p. 19-20).

Recognizing the importance of the critical thinking development, A.Sharikov, nevertheless, is not inclined to consider this process as the central objective of media education. In his opinion, the development of communicative, creative skills of students, the abilities to interpret, create and communicate media messages is no less important (Sharikov, 1990, p.46).

In July 1990 during the academic conference on media education in Toulouse A. Sharikov surveyed 23 international educators and experts in the fields of media literacy and mass communications. The objectives of survey were to learn the number of experts believing in the connection between media education and the development of media (60 % answered that media education promotes the development of media), to specify the main objectives of media education, to verify the definitions of "critical thinking" and "communicative abilities" (Sharikov, 1990, p.48).

As for the opinions of the experts about the objectives of media education, they, according to Sharikov's data, ranged in the priority order as follows: the development of communicative abilities, critical thinking and interpretation, the development of skills "to decode" media texts, to create own media texts, to evaluate media texts, to reflect on media in the system of sociocultural associations. The development of technical skills to use media technology was ranked as the last one (Sharikov, 1990, p.50). Reflecting on the conducted survey A. Sharikov came to conclusion that critical thinking in media education context usually stands for the process of the analysis of a media text, which "is aimed at the interpreting the underlying message and results in three options – interpretation of the latent message, its evaluation and expression of one own's attitude to it. This process is both of individual and creative nature. Creativity in this case is exhibited through generating new meanings of a message" (Sharikov, 1990, p. 58). The advantage of the given definition is its universal character thus it may be applied depending on the referent system (i.e. orientation of a teacher towards a particular key concept of media education). If a media educator is predisposed towards teaching social or political aspects of media, the correspondent type of information will be evaluated and interpreted. If a teacher bases his teaching on the aesthetic concept, then the analysis of art aspects of media texts will take place in his/ her classroom. If a teacher is interested in semiotics, then sign systems of a media text will be analyzed. However, Sharikov remarks that disagreement between personal referent systems of a teacher and students may cause problems.

A. Sharikov has also defined the term "media communicative competence", as "the proficiency in perception, creation and communication of message through technical and semiotic systems taking into account their limitations, based on critical thinking, and also on the ability to media dialogue with other people" (Sharokov, 1990, p. 64).

The book "Media Education: International and Russian experience" also included a brief historical and pedagogical ouline of the development of media education in Russia. A. Sharikov proved the legitimacy of Russian media education in the context of interrelations between education and culture. "There are two main functions of education related to culture. The first function is to maintain culture with the help of the mechanism of reproduction of culture at individual level. In other words culture can only be preserved through education. Without education, culture runs the risk of being destroyed. I will call this function of education as "reproductive". The second function is that education is an essential prerequisite for the

development of culture. In other words education provides that foundation for the development of culture. I will label this function as "productive". The latter function is connected, first of all, to the creative structures of human activity. So, education in a broad sense is the condition, both for maintaining, and advancing culture. (...) If one accepts such point of view, then media education is a prerequisite of both maintaining, and developing media culture» (Sharikov, 1990, p. 25-26).

Besides A. Sharikov drew the attention of readers that any new emerging mass medium gives rise to a corresponding field of education: first, at the level of professional training, and then - in secondary schools and departments of education. Thus, as Sharikov emphasized, it is the professionals in media sphere (film critics, journalists etc.), sensing problems of the dialogue between an author of a media text and audience, tend to share their knowledge with students and teachers.

Further A. Sharikov conventionally divided media education in Russia in two main directions: education on the material of newspapers, magazines and radio ("journalistic" direction) and education on the material of cinematograph ("aesthetic" direction) and described landmarks in the development of these directions from the 1920s to the 1980s pointing out their dramatic dependence on Marxist ideology (Sharikov, 1990, p.29-38).

In 1991 A. Sharikov (together with T. Stroganova) compiled the bibliographic catalogue of books and theses on media education (Sharikov, Stroganova, 1991). The other collaborative work (with E. Cherkashin) resulted in the publication of an experimental media education curriculum prototype for school pupils (Sharikov, Cherkashin, 1991).

A. Sharikov highlighted a number of problems connected to the intensive development of media in Russia (media as a "parallel school", media and the system of traditional education, the necessity of "protection" of children from negative influence of media in an information society. In particular, he emphasized a serious problem of media influence on the development of values and norms of behaviour of children and teenagers. "While in totalitarian period this problem was solved by censorship control, that is by limitation of the accessible information, now its solution is impossible without the development of a referent system of values and critical attitude to media messages" (Sharikov, Cherkashin, 1991, p. 1-2).

In 1991 A. Sharikov elaborated an experimental syllabus of the course "Mass Communications" (Sharikov, Cherkashin, 1991, p. 5-25) for secondary schools. It included the following issues:

- main concepts and laws of the communication theory
- semiotic systems, their structure and properties;
- perception and interpretation of messages based on the development of skills of analysis, interpretation, evaluation and expression of own attitude;
- mass media (structural, functional, social and other aspects) (Sharikov, Cherkashin, 1991, p. 6).

It was stressed that the above-stated issues should preferably be introduced not only through lectures, but mainly through hands-on activities, where pupils could be involved in creative work related to different types of media - print press, cinematograph, photo, sound recording, television, computer communications, etc.

The second experimental syllabus by Sharikov and Cherkashin, "Mass Media and Education" (for classes with pedagogical emphasis, i.e. in special schools whose graduates as a rule enter university Departments of Education) (Sharikov, Cherkashin, 1991, p.26-36) is constructed by the similar pattern. However a significant place is given to matters of teaching methods of media education. Recommended activities included: production of model dust-covers for children's books, photo montage, slide/video films, audio recordings (radio programs, educational programs etc.), school papers, television programs, holding seminars, discussions related to media texts analysis and more (Sharikov, Cherkashin, 1991, p. 29). These activities were supposed to result in the development of skills of perception, understanding, evaluation, interpretation of various media texts, and the development of communicative abilities of pupils.

In the second half of the 1990s A. Sharikov changed the sphere of his academic interests due to another job position. He became the supervisor of the sociology office of the Russian television and radio company RTR (Moscow). His research during those years was centered on the influences

of television on society and the problems of monitoring. The data of the research included also TV-preferences of children and youth.

Currently Dr. A. Sharikov is the Professor of the State University *Higher School of Economics*, Department of Media Management and Media Business (Moscow).

Conclusion.

The analysis of media educational work of the famous Russian media educators leads us to the conclusion that media education in Russia is developing, building on the synthesis of the aesthetic, socio-cultural, and practical concepts, with a focus on the development of media competence of the audience, mainly school and youth. The enthusiasts of media education, even devoid of substantial public support for its innovative projects, achieve significant and meaningful results.

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УДК 378

Российские медиапедагоги: портреты

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Аннотация. Анализ медиаобразовательного творчества известных российских медиапедагогов приводит нас к выводу, что медиаобразование в России развивается с опорой на синтез эстетической, социокультурной, культурологической и практической концепций, с ориентацией на развитие медиакомпетентности аудитории, преимущественно школьной, молодежной. Изученный опыт показывает, что энтузиасты медиаобразования, даже лишенные существенной государственной поддержки своих новаторских проектов, добиваются существенных и значимых результатов.

Ключевые слова: Россия; медиапедагоги; медиаобразование; медиакомпетентность; медиаграмотность; школы; учителя.