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COGNITIVE REQUEST OF A NEW-MEDIA SUBJECT IN THE DIGITAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

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ABSTRACT

The modern level of development of the digital space allows talking about the expansion of not only the communicative capabilities, but also the cognitive demands of the subject. At the same time, the priority in the educational practice of knowledge accumulation and formation of skills for their reproduction is replaced by the main arrays of the necessary information for a particular person in the digital gadget. The development of social networks, the possibility of free network access cannot but affect the paradigm of university education. In this regard, the authors show the type of identity inherent in a modern university and answer the question about the relevance of university education for a new-language subject. We carry out the exposition of media education prospects of a modern university in the context of the use of digital technologies. We consider the transformations that are a consequence of the integration of digital technologies into the educational space of a modern university. The authors try to substantiate their understanding of a number of simultaneously existing cognitive positions in this regard, therefore they turn to the concepts of American media theorist M. Prensky [4] about the division of modern subjects into "digital natives" and "digital immigrants", as well as his concept of "digital wisdom". We make an attempt to show that the only possible full-fledged understanding of the goal of media education at its present stage is connected with its potential for the humanistic development of the subject.

INTRODUCTION

The development of digital technologies in recent decades has determined the emergence of other (new) types of primary and secondary socialization, when the images reproduced by new media have the greatest impact on people. That is, digital technologies caused changes not only in everyday life, but also had an impact on all spheres of society and act today as an integral part of the interaction of most people and their access to knowledge and information. One cannot but agree that digitalization is transforming the existing format of higher education and communications. That is why it is necessary to deepen our understanding of the implications of the digitalization process for higher education.

According to the economic and social needs of modern society, today it is necessary to have a higher level of professional skills and cognitive flexibility, which requires continuing education throughout working career. At the same time, the expectations from a format of higher education, its quality and availability are changing in a society.

In the long run, this situation raises some issues for the universities on the possibility of not only maintaining the quality of higher education, but also improving it in the horizon of constant growth in student demand. There are natural questions about how the university will respond to such evolutionary challenges, how it will modify higher education programs and look for the sources of additional funding. The knowledge sharing process is influenced by expanding technical capabilities. The need to compete with other universities in the context of rapid global changes leads to the emergence of a new understanding of the education process, when distance education moves from the category of additional to the main, and the use of digital technologies becomes the main teaching method.

The digitalization process, understood as a way of restructuring many areas of social life through digital communication and creating a media infrastructure [1], is a megatrend striking all fields of our life.

The university, as the main agent of higher education, faces with the need to act as an active driving force of the digitalization process, and not to prevent the presence of modern technologies in it. The development of digital space over the past ten years has made it possible to change the ways in which education can be provided to the network users. For example, the Starbucks coffee shop network began to collaborate with Arizona State University, so that its employees could receive a subsidized education outside the general competition in the online program Global Freshman Academy in the USA [2].

The online mode of education creates more flexible opportunities for students and guarantees the principles of equality and inclusiveness of all students in the learning process. Digital learning materials are reproduced at the extremely low economic costs and the copyright need becomes more flexible. However, digital technologies themselves do not necessarily contribute to raising the level of education quality in the educational process, therefore the quality of educational content is of paramount importance here. Teachers have the opportunity to focus on the role of mentors, developing the students' skills in the selection of information and its critical assessment. That is, digital media can contribute to more immersed and problematic learning, for example, the digitization of the grading process allows quickly adjusting the students' performance and optimize a learning strategy.

There are qualitative changes in the way of interaction with information in the modern world. This allows speaking of a new formation, when the need for theoretical knowledge begins to dominate. It should be

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noted that the need for theoretical knowledge is dictated not by the desire to establish the truth, but by the possibility of its technological applicability, in other words, the goal of science is to obtain commercial profits from the applied application of scientific products. It is formed a techno-scientific approach, where the main goal of science is the production of innovations that can be commercialized. The specialization of knowledge today ceases to act as a priority. Modern inventions and discoveries are not made on the basis of finding a solution to a specific problem, but are the results of theoretical hypotheses and research. In other words, in a post-industrial society, where the greatest value belongs to information and new knowledge, the theory is rehabilitated as a necessary stage for various kinds of practical innovations.

Recognition of the theory importance, according to some researchers, determines the emergence of a new fundamental principle of social life. Thus, the British sociologist F. Webster believes that an increase in the demand for higher education is connected precisely with the need for theoretical knowledge as a guarantee of successful integration into the information society [3]. However, speaking of the need for a theory, it is not the theory of any subject area, such as physics, that is meant, but the emerging new understanding of the theory as critical reflexivity.

An acceptance of the importance of free exchange of information and theoretical knowledge shall be actualized by the problem of the presence of a condition that is necessary for the purposeful intellectual search of the subject in a situation where the main emphasis is placed on the technological effectiveness of the knowledge obtained, and on its theoretical significance. In our opinion, this condition is the digital format of interaction with information.

METHODS

The methodological basis of this study is the focus on the concept of separating users into "digital natives" and "digital immigrants" by the American researcher M. Prensky [4]. "Digital natives" are people who have been born in the digital era, that is, a generation that is commonly described as born with "digital DNA" [5]. "Digital immigrants" are those people who have been born and raised in pre-digital reality. Accordingly, digital natives are those who have grown up using the technologies as prostheses for building their body and taking the network culture as a natural environment, unlike digital immigrants, for whom the digital environment is alien, and to which they need to adapt.

We also applied hermeneutic and abstract-to-concrete methods inherent in the humanitarian studies.

RESULTS

For digital space, it is common to be open for the implementation of the subjective activity of continuous improvement, which ensures its perception as constantly updated and therefore relevant. At the same time, this leads to the emergence of intellectual intuition about the progress and denial of any cognitive limitations. A person finds himself/herself in a situation where it is impossible to describe the world in stable ways, which act as the basis of scientific evidence, since it becomes multiple [6].

For the education sector, this influence of the new media space can contribute to the motivation of students to make independent discoveries, because it requires interactions and active participation, and not the passivity that the traditional paradigm of the educational process implies. However, at the same time, the new-media practices can contribute to communicative disconnection, since the digital environment can provide a personified experience in perceiving information that will help a particular student in implementing his/her cognitive request, expanding his/her intellectual tools. And this experience cannot be obtained in any other way than through interaction with the media, and not with other students.

The emergence of macrosocial digital interactions and the increasing interdependence of subjects necessitate an understanding of media education as a phenomenon based on both the positive and negative effects of digital progress. The ability to level negative effects and actualize positive ones can be implemented through the introduction of a humanistic component into the media educational context.

This need is dictated by a number of current trends:

1)   the understanding of modernity as a media-centered epoch entails the emergence of such an ideological installation as technological determinism. It is not the critical that is generally accepted, but the confidential perception of the media environment;
2)   the emerging dichotomy of the "real" and "virtual" or "technical" and "ideal" in the understanding of new media space blurs the notion of the duties and rights of the modern subject, because there is the primacy of the subjective assessment of any media-phenomenon, and, as a result, social gaps appear when interacting with other users;
3)   the discrepancy between how new media are created (on the basis of a rational theory) and used (extreme emotional involvement) creates a situation of semantic gap, when the majority of participants in the interaction are not able to see the mediation of their actions by the matrix of its creators.

DISCUSSION

The concept of digital environment is inseparable from the idea of a distance, virtual or digital way of learning [7]. For a complete picture of the modern perception of digitalization in the education sector, we summarize a number of ideas of the American researcher K. Davis and her colleagues [8]. A common approach to understanding the digitalization of the education system is its understanding as a system that defines a new type of interaction between teachers and students, and does not depend on the geographical location of each of the participants, but also complicates the teaching staff. In this article, the authors note that there are about 200,000 students [9] in Canada and 700,000 students in the United States who study in different virtual environments [10]. The authors refer to the studies in which it has been found that digital students have a higher level of motivation to learn [11] and have more productive learning skills [12] that will allow them to interact with other students and teachers located in remote geographic areas [13]. The limitations and negative effects of new-media education include technical problems and a high potential for students' destruction [14]. In other words, a number of paradoxical effects are found in the digitalization of the education process; on the one hand, some studies show that the students are more satisfied with their learning experience, others that there is no difference in satisfaction from the traditional form and the digitalized environment [15]. The concept of digital education is a new phenomenon in the field of education. Today, this type of distance education has a number of advantages, which consist in the possibility of self-selection of subjects, time, sources, interaction channels, etc., which allow talking about increasing productivity. At the same time, the problem of the presence of students' motivation remains relevant, since the educational content of distance education is perceived by students passively, that is, the quality of knowledge gained in this way remains the same as with traditional education formats.

In 2009, M. Prensky departs from the concept of division into digital natives and immigrants, despite the fact that these concepts have become very popular and are regularly reproduced in the scientific articles and suggests a new concept, - "digital wisdom".[4]

Unlike a strict separation of digital immigrants and natives, according to which digital immigrants could not become natives, according to Prensky, all subjects are able to acquire digital wisdom through the interaction with technologies. M. Prensky understands "digital wisdom" "[...] as the ability to find practical, creative, context-sensitive and emotional satisfying solutions to complex human problems" [16]. The author claims that new technologies can make us not only smarter, but also wiser. Prensky stresses that "in an unimaginably difficult future, an incapable digital person, no matter how wise, cannot access the tools of wisdom that will be available even to the least wise people with digital improvement" [16]. In our opinion, this concept of Prensky is very interesting, since it treats all subjects as those able to come to digital excellence. That is, he perceives digital improvement as an essential element of human existence.
Indeed, one cannot but agree that the social nature of new media has a fundamental impact on the development of mankind. There is an opportunity to create new global communities that can unite people with common interests. But at the same time, there are such effects that in the socio-cultural horizon will obviously become the cause of changes in the behavior of digital subjects.

Today, when new digital media has become a "new normal" [17], they have created a special social digital environment [18]. The emergence and development of mass open educational platforms and online courses is seen as a natural stage in digitalization and, therefore, democratization of higher education. It is assumed that this will improve the quality of education. However, in our opinion, such an aspect of online education is beyond reflection as its ability to become a cause that aggravates the isolation of subjects, and, accordingly, the attendant effect, when the digital form of access to education practically removes the humanistic component of the education process.

The Canadian researcher D. Tapscott views the current generation as those who are accustomed to the fast pace and unlimited freedom and rejects the existing culture, replacing it with a culture of harmony [19]. The author's position on changing the new generation of intellectual activity, the presence of a different set of social skills has caused, in our opinion, a change in the perception of everyday life. For example, when setting a rating for a taxi driver, a tutor on an educational platform, there is axiological confusion, when a low assessment of the satisfaction degree of needs is aimed not at improving the quality of the service provided, but at placing its supplier at low rating levels, which determines the impossibility of using these services by other people. This is a consequence of the lack of humanistic responsibility. Responsibility, in this context, implies the presence of an internal guideline to limit one's own freedom to respect other people's values. Therefore, media education shall include an axiological component.

CONCLUSION

The concept of digital wisdom of M. Prensky can be supplemented with a humanistic imperative and the need to include a humanistic element in media education. [4] Otherwise, digital wisdom turns out to be another speculative concept, which means specific skills of using technical digital gadgets.

Digital wisdom implies not only expanding our physical abilities through the existing technologies, but also constantly expanding the field of ethical and social responsibility.

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This component seems to be a necessary condition for successful socialization in the new media space of a new type of cognitive subject with digital wisdom. As a result, media literacy, which presupposes a humanistic component, is capable of harmonizing digital social interactions.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST
There is no conflict of interest.

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