STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS' INFORMATION LITERACY IN THE NEW MEDIA ERA

Liu YinHong

The Library of Wuhan University of Technology, Wuhan 430063, Hubei, China

*Corresponding Author E-mail: lilaclyh@163.com

This is an open access article distributed under the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited

ARTICLE DETAILS

ABSTRACT

Article History:

Received 12 November 2017
 Accepted 12 December 2017
 Available online 1 January 2018

The new media era has been ushered in by the extensive use of new online media such as Microblogging, WeChat, QQ and Mobile Client (APP). With the advent of the new media era, information dissemination methods and contents have experienced tremendous innovations and changes, which poses challenges for middle school students to acquire valid information and resist bad information environments while facilitating their acquisition and dissemination of information. The impact of new technologies urgently requires us to seek new information technology education approaches and strategies, cultivate and improve middle school students' information literacy. Based on this, this paper explains characteristics of the new media era and urgency and necessity of information literacy education among middle school students and proposes strategies to promote middle school students' information literacy education in the new media era.

KEYWORDS

new media, middle school students, information literacy, promotion strategy.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Internet, mobile communication technologies and wireless technologies are developing rapidly, mobile terminals such as smart phones and tablet computers are becoming popular, and new information dissemination technologies represented by Microblog, WeChat and mobile client (APP) are widely used. According to the 40th "Statistical Reports on Internet Development in China" released by China Internet information Center in Beijing, as of June 2017, the number of Internet users in China has reached 751 million, with Internet penetration rate at 54.3%; mobile Internet users in China has reached 724 million, and proportion of Internet users using mobile phones to access the Internet has grown from 95.1% at the end of 2016 to the current 96.3% [1]. The era of new media has infiltrated people's lives with irresistible power, profoundly affecting social development and transformation. The arrival of the new media era puts forward new requirements and challenges for information literacy education of middle school students.

2. NEW MEDIA ERA AND ITS CHARACTERISTICS

New media represents an emerging media form developed after traditional media as newspapers, radio, television, and so on. Known as "the fifth-generation media", it is a communication & media form spreading information and entertainment via digital technology, network technology, mobile technology through channels like Internet, wireless communication networks, satellites and terminals like computers, mobile phones and digital televisions [2]. The new media features digitization, hyperlinks, interactivity and immediacy, massiveness and sharing, multimedia and hypertext, personalization and socialization, virtualization and networking. It has various forms of Internet portal, BBS, blog, Microblog, WeChat, search engines, chat rooms, which is superior to traditional media in terms of high popularity, strong interaction, equal communication and in-depth interaction, but also have potential risks. We must make full use of and give full play to its advantages, while adopting certain strategies and measures to curb its risks.

3. THE IMPACT OF THE NEW MEDIA ERA ON THE INFORMATION LITERACY EDUCATION FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS

The new media "dominates" the new era due to its convenient and rapid access of information, diversity, and strong entertainment characteristics. It has attracted wide attention and is extensively used by people, especially among young people such as college students and middle school students. According to the survey, as of June 2017, Chinese netizens are still mainly the 10-39 age group, which accounted for 72.1% of the total. The proportion of netizens in the 20-29 age group was the highest 29.7%, that of 10-19, 30-39 age groups accounted for 19.4% and 23.0%, respectively. As of June 2017, China's netizens were still mainly secondary education groups, netizens of junior high school, high school/technical secondary school/technical school accounted for 37.9%, 25.5% respectively. Netizens' education structure has not changed much compared with that at the end of 2016. As of June 2017, middle school students still have the highest proportion among Chinese netizens, which was 24.8%. It can be seen that middle school students' online time length and frequency account for a great proportion. However, the massive network information has brought a lot of useful information to us accompanied by many vulgar, false and negative reports. These contents exactly satisfy middle school students' curiosity need, which subtly influences their world outlook and values and penetrates to their study and life. How to enable middle school students to make better use of new media to obtain information, discriminate information, use information and how to enable schools to better cultivate middle school students by using new media is an important issue facing basic education in primary and secondary schools. At present, information literacy education is not emphasized in China, which still stays at the stage of information technology education. The information literacy education system waits to be constructed and improved in primary and secondary schools. In the current situation where information literacy is seriously lacking, various middle schools and related organizations should embark on the work of information literacy education among middle school students. The cultivation of information literacy among middle school students will not only help improve their understanding and application of new media, but

also promote information literacy of the entire nation, which is more conducive to the training of national talents.

4. STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS' INFORMATION LITERACY EDUCATION IN THE NEW MEDIA ERA

New media attracts middle school students with its novelty and interestingness. Middle school students are easy to accept new things. Multimedia teaching is already their important way of learning, also an important channel for them to acquire knowledge. Many middle school students cannot skillfully use computers to search electronic resources and network resources, and cannot accurately screen, analyze and summarize the retrieved information. The new media era is an era of information explosion, which requires information participants to have certain information awareness, information knowledge, information capabilities and corresponding information moral qualities. These four aspects are the connotation of information literacy [3]. To improve middle school students' new media information literacy, we will discuss the connotation of information literacy and propose corresponding promotion strategies to help middle school students learn to judge what information is needed for a particular time, how to obtain valid information, how to evaluate and effectively use the required information.

3.1 Establish New Media Awareness and Determine New Contents of Information Literacy Education for Middle School Students in the New Media Environment

Contemporary middle school students do not have strong desire to explore new media knowledge and information. Middle school education is focused on learning, so many middle school students depend on classroom and paper resources to acquire information, rarely using and even lacking contact with electronic resources, database resources and network resources. In the new media environment, information dissemination and knowledge acquisition modes are diversified, which breaks the time and space constraints, so that anyone can conduct information dissemination and knowledge acquisition "at anytime, anywhere and to anyone". Hence, the traditional "information technology"-based information education system for middle school students can no longer meet middle school students' requirements to select and accept information. Faced with the new media environment, in addition to general "information technology" courses, middle schools should also add courses in the area of application of new media technologies. On the one hand, they must focus on cultivating information skills and techniques necessary for middle school students and cultivate middle school students' ability to understand and grasp various modern information technology and new media tools to acquire the required information and knowledge. On the other hand, it is also necessary to strengthen the education of information ethics and morality among middle school students, develop their ability to distinguish media and resist bad information, so that they can make full use of the advantages of new media to constantly improve and enhance their capabilities.

3.2 Adopt New Media Thinking and Carry Out Information Literacy Education with Thinking and Discourse Form Preferred by Middle School Students

Passionate towards people and things, middle school students like to know about novel things, and are more likely to accept and use new media such as QQ, WeChat, Microblog. Due to knowledge limitations, they have different access to and understanding of more professional retrieval courses. As the main undertaker of middle school students' information literacy education, schools and public libraries, especially children's libraries, need organize characteristic, easily accessible information literacy activities suitable for middle school students, set up basic information literacy courses, and convey the importance of "information literacy" to them from both theoretical and practical perspectives. Some public libraries have already made relevant explorations. For example, the library of Foshan City, Guangdong Province, regularly organizes and conducts library information literacy training activities among the juveniles. By their own understanding of document information and firsthand experience of information resource use in daily work, librarians help readers to effectively, quickly search documents and information sources and obtain, use the required information through training. At the same time, the librarians use training courses to answer readers' questions of literature circulation encountered in daily life and cultivate their behavior of civilized readers. The training was supported by

numerous young learners who actively participated in it, which enabled little readers who have never retrieved books to master the basic skills of using library resources [4]. Children's Reading Center of Beijing Changping District Library makes full use of online media, organizes online children's activities, and creates children's readership and WeChat public platform for all friends. The series of reading activities not only change the inherent image of library in little readers' mind as a site for borrowing and returning books, but also give play to the role of libraries in spreading scientific and cultural knowledge [5]. Public libraries enjoy an unparalleled advantage in improving middle school students' information literacy. Library as a cultural information center has a wealth of documentary information resources, complete hardware facilities, a professionally trained team with specialized theoretical knowledge and rich practical experience. It can provide different information services targeted at different readers by opening literature resources and applying new technologies. While providing information services to students, librarians unconsciously promote information literacy of middle school student reader groups, cultivate students' "ability to analyze, utilize and evaluate information with a focus on students' information ethics, ability to independently analyze and solve problems" [6]. It can be seen that public libraries, children's libraries in particular, have conditions and capabilities to contribute to the improvement of middle school students' information literacy, which is also their responsibilities.

3.3 Deepen Understanding of New Media, and Scientifically Use New Media Technologies like Microblog, WeChat to Lead Information Literacy Education

The advent of the new media era is a result of the development of new theories and technologies such as information technology, communication technology and mobile network technology. Middle school students need understand these new technologies in the new media era and learn the correct strategies for using new media in order to improve learning efficiency, acquire valid information and learn effectively. In the new media environment, smart phones and networks have seized the important fields for information and data dissemination. In platforms such as WeChat and microblog, application of Internet information and multimedia technologies enables integration of various different information forms (graphics, text, images, animations, sounds, etc.). The personalized, novel and humorous style of the endlessly emerging network languages and new linguistic styles are deeply favored by the juvenile. The Microblog, WeChat, QQ or web articles that write and disseminate information in such new linguistic style are more easily accepted by young people and can therefore receive higher rate of forwarding, reading or click, enabling readers to master relevant information in a relaxed environment. In the same way, MOOC, an open education platform greatly promoted in the information literacy education for undergraduates due to its great role, has broken the traditional teaching model. It uses new media platform to help users independently choose learning resources and thus realize open access. Libraries at home and abroad make active attempts in this field and have achieved certain results. For example, "Information Retrieval" given by Professor Huang Ruhua of Wuhan University was launched on "iCourse"- China University MOOC platform to carry out information literacy education among all citizens [7]. In addition, through information literacy summer camp, University of Science and Technology of China cultivate university postgraduates' information literacy ability of information acquisition, information analysis and information processing in scientific research activities [8]. American Library Association (ALA) set up three courses including "Teaching Information Literacy to College Students" on MOOC platform [9]. The above fully proves that the teaching and service model of MOOC is worthy of popularization and application. Middle schools and public libraries (children's libraries) should conform to information technology development and middle school education trend in the era, make full use of modern information technology to carry out new media information literacy education, provide "online" information education courses by using mobile Internet technology in the form of new media like QQ group, WeChat, microblog, online video, micro-sites, offer specialized online services and teaching interactions to realize universality, timeliness, convenience, interaction, and effectiveness of information literacy education.

3.4 Purify the Information Environment and Create Good Atmosphere to Help Students Shape Positive Value and World Outlook

The new media has greatly expanded the new space for primary and secondary school students to understand the world, integrate into the world and seek self-development. It also poses challenges to primary and middle school students lacking self-control: how to obtain complete and effective information and avoid adverse information environments. In the information ocean with explosive new media, middle school students with limited knowledge and experience have instable thinking consciousness and have not yet developed complete worldview system. Lacking ability to discern and select information, they have weak judgment and self-control. The advent of new media enables middle school students to access more information which is however mixed and uneven. The long-term penetration of negative information may make some middle school students lose their rational thinking and direction, severely affecting their mental health. Middle school students lacking self-control can easily indulge in Internet chat and games, which even affects their study. The series of events such as "Internet addiction", "game addiction" and "on-line employment of homework doer" now and then remind us that we need not only help middle school students filtrate healthy and positive information, but also teach them to better identify and use beneficial information, abide by relevant ethical and moral laws and regulations in information activities, solve encountered problems with information properly, sensibly and legally, establish correct ideology and value orientation, avoid activities detrimental to moral and ethical communication as well as illegal activities, consciously resist bad content and develop green, civilized and healthy online habits. Meanwhile, various middle schools or related organizations can organize relevant activities and set up special information literacy education courses to help middle school students establish correct and healthy attitudes to life in the new media era through lectures, debates and quizzes. In the middle school campus, the extensive power of communication of campus can be fully utilized to strengthen propaganda of information literacy. Through information communication ways easily accessible to school students, such as campus radio, electronic screens and school WeChat public account, campus should take a lead in information literacy cultivation, and create a positive information literacy environment for students, which will play an irreplaceable role in subtly affecting cultivation of middle school students' information literacy. On the other hand, parents' participation into supervision and control should be encouraged so that students can monitor themselves, fulfill learning tasks and stay away from harmful information. The middle school days constitute an important period for the development of world outlook and moral values. We must strive to rectify disorder of the information environment, regulate netizens' words and deeds, control the browse rights of middle school students, and promote the healthy development of new media and students. This requires the concerted efforts of the government, society, schools, teachers and students, and parents to form joint force in regulatory governance and create a good environment for sound development of middle school students.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The information literacy education for middle school students should adapt to changes in information communication media and middle school students' information behavior. In the era of new media, efforts should be made to discuss middle school students' new media acceptance and use habits, re-examine the concept of information literacy education from scientific new media thinking, adopt correct and appropriate methods and new media technologies for middle school students' information literacy education to achieve desired results.

REFERENCES

- [1] China Internet information Center. 2017. 40th Statistical Reports on Internet Development in China. http://www.cnnic.cn/gywm/xwzx/rdxw/201708/t20170804_69449.htm.
- [2] Baidu Encyclopedia. 2017. New Media. <https://baike.baidu.com>.
- [3] Baidu Encyclopedia. 2017. Information Literacy. <https://baike.baidu.com/item>
- [4] Review of Youth Library Information Literacy Training Phase 5. 2017. http://www.sohu.com/a/160786616_291629.

[5] Zhang, H. 2015. How Should Children's Reading Center Carry Out Information Literacy Education. China Library Weekly. http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_4d5a923b0102vrrl.html.

[6] Jin, H., Wen, Y. 2013. Expanding the Information Education Function of University Libraries in the All-media Era. Journal of Library Science, 74, (1), 68-69.

[7] Huang, R.H., Li, B.Y. 2015. Innovation of Information Literacy Instruction Under the Background of Massive Online Course. Document Information and Knowledge, (4), 14-25.

[8] China's first postgraduate information literacy summer camp started in University of Science and Technology of China. 2017.

[9] Teaching Information Literacy to College Students. 2017. <http://www.ala.org/onlinelearning/teaching-information-literacy-college-students>.