

ORGANIZING MORAL EDUCATION FOR TEENAGERS IN THE COURSE OF HUMANITARIAN SUBJECTS

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This article discusses the issue of moral education and the formation of ethical principles in teenagers through teaching humanitarian subjects. The importance of this issue stems from those cultural and spiritual changes that Russian society is currently experiencing and from the current priority to preserve and develop the Russian traditions of moral education, patriotism and humanitarianism needed to instill highest moral principles in new generations and to support the academic and cultural development of the human capital. This article aims to develop the issue in view of the fact that education today prioritizes moral education that is orientated towards raising children to be rich in fairness, kindness, generosity, tolerance, humility and patriotism. Over the course of the study we used both theoretical (comparative and logical analyses, synthesis, generalization, modeling) and empirical methods (studying achieves, regulatory documents, innovative practices in ethical education and organizing discussions, observations, surveys, questionnaires, statistical analysis and the pedagogical experiment aimed at instilling ethical principles in teenagers in the process of teaching humanitarian subjects). All in all, the results of our empirical work suggest that our hypothesis in regards to moral education is correct. Teachers and student teachers might find the materials of this article useful.

Keywords: personality, morality, moral education, patriotism, pedagogical conditions.

INTRODUCTION

The topicality of the problem

The Russian society today needs to be supported by more individuals who are patriotic, conscientious, kind, empathetic, tolerant and humble. The range of humanitarian subjects that are studied at school do not fulfill their role in moral education to the full extent in view of the following problems: 1) teachers lack in professional qualifications and are unable to organize the cultural and moral development of teenagers on a high level; 2) the issue of moral education was considered unimportant for a long time – since the Perestroika; 3) post-soviet education hasn't formed the concept of children's moral development that would correspond to the new socio-economic reality; 4) despite the current positive changes in humanitarian education, the economic status of those who traditionally supported the integrity and morality of our society remain below moderate; 5) families do not take responsibility for educating their children; parents often lack

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in moral principles themselves and are unable to organize moral education of their children and instill high moral principles in them.

Working towards these orientations and addressing the outlined problems implies the revision of educational contents and educational practices by employing proactive teaching methods aimed at the intellectual, social and moral development of young people.

Explore Importance of the Problem

The issue of moral education among teenagers is extremely important today and is being actively developed by Russian and international educators and scholars alike. The theoretical framework of the study is based on the works of scholars who were focused on the spiritual and moral formation of an individual (Kagan, 1988); the general theoretical aspects of spiritual and moral culture development (Nikandorov, 1990); different aspects of moral education along with different empirical research practices (Dubey & Gunasekaran, 2016); the theories of value orientations (Cohen, 2016); psycho-pedagogical issues of a personality development (Fors & Vetlesen, 2016); the theoretical basis of the system approach (Lisitskaya *et al*, 2015); multicultural education and ethno-pedagogization of educational processes (Almonte-Acosta, 2011); fundamental psycho-pedagogical theories and concepts of socio-orientated, learner-centered, activity-based approaches in education (Rutland & Killen, 2017), research methodology for the study of the academic disciplines integration into pedagogical systems (Killen *et al*, 2013).

Thus, it is appropriate to consider moral education as one of the most important pedagogical issues of today. Despite the fact that certain aspects of moral education and morality itself are extensively covered in psycho-pedagogical literature, there are hardly any pedagogical works studying the development of moral principles in teenagers through humanitarian disciplines and their influence on the productivity of their future work (Dyngneson, Gross & Berson, 2003). At the same time current educational requirements call for new approaches to moral education that would adequately correspond to the current changes happening in the country (Gabdulchakov, Kusainov & Kalimullin, 2016).

Features of formation of values of education

The results of this article can be used by educators involved in moral education working in preschool institutions, schools, vocational colleges and higher education institutions.

Status of a problem

Actively engaging with young people over an extended period of time analyzing their life goals and priorities, observing how they interact and build their relationships with other people allowed us to gain an insight into the current trends in society:

- their mental and physical health is declining which can lead to irreversible consequences that would have implications for the cultural, intellectual and working potential of the whole country;
- the attraction of young people towards ‘fast’ money and easy life which ultimately leads to the destruction of morality in society;
- the devaluation of education as a tool to facilitate cultural, moral and intellectual development of people;
- the regulative function of moral values is breaking down under the influence of current mass culture which undermines and replaces local and national cultural traditions;

These trends are the outcome of the conflicting requirements that our society has for the moral education of teenagers. They are also the outcome of insufficient work within educational theory and practice in the context of humanitarian subjects. Based on this we formulated the main research question: what are the pedagogical conditions that ensure effective moral education among teenagers engaging in humanitarian subjects?

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Objectives of the study

In the course of this study we aimed to achieve the following:

- to specify the nature of the term ‘moral education’ from the moral and legal perspectives;
- to define the main purpose and contents of the moral component in humanitarian subjects taking into account the specific characteristics of teenagers;
- to identify, theoretically consider and empirically approbate the pedagogical conditions that ensure effective moral education among teenagers engaging in humanitarian subjects.

Theoretical and empirical methods

The aforementioned objectives were achieved through the use of the following methods:

- Theoretical (comparative and logical analysis, synthesis, generalization and modeling);
- Empirical (studying archives and normative documents in relation to the issue, studying state-of-the-art research in the field of moral education for teenagers, discussions, surveys, purposeful observations of schoolchildren, statistical analysis, pedagogical experiment aimed at providing effective moral education to teenagers within the context of educational institutions).

Base of research

The research was carried out in the schools affiliated with Kazan Federal University: School №3, School №10, School №13, School №103, School №167 situated in Kazan as well as in other schools situated in the Apastovsky, Drozhzhanovsky and Kaibickiy districts of the Republic of Tatarstan.

Stages of the study

The research had three main stages:

Stage I. The first stage involved studying philosophical, psycho-pedagogical, socio-cultural literature relevant to the research issue; the methodologies for the research project were defined: the main objective, aims, methods and hypothesis. Moreover, the observing stage of the experiment was carried out; the program of experimental empirical work was developed.

Stage II. The next stage included empirical work and the development of the model of moral education that helps teenagers develop their moral principles and allows to assess their moral development; the effectiveness of educational conditions was also studied.

Stage III. At this stage the results were analyzed and generalized, the conclusions were made regarding the effectiveness of certain educational conditions; methodological and practical recommendations for educators were developed.

Evaluation criteria

In the course of our work we defined the following evaluation criteria:

- the ability to analyze historical facts and events to assess the cultural and socio-economical development of society;
- the ability to formulate and defend one's opinion in regards to a specific issue;
- the ability to employ historical analysis methods to evaluate facts and concepts;
- the ability to think critically when analyzing ideas and concepts.

RESULTS

Our empirical work that involved approbating educational conditions necessary for organizing effective moral education had three stages (observing and reporting, formative, concluding).

At the **observing and reporting stage** we divided teenagers into control and experimental groups (all in all, 238 participants – with 100 in the experimental group and 138 in the control group).

In order to assess the initial level of moral education in teenagers we have conducted a survey. The results of this survey indicated that in both groups teenagers

had low levels of moral education (20% in the experimental group and 22,5% in the control group demonstrated moderate levels of moral development; 51% and 50% in both groups respectively showed levels below moderate; 29% and 27,5% had very low level of moral education). Not a single participant demonstrated a high level at this stage.

For this stage we modified 'the flowchart for self-evaluation' developed by Kochetov. As a result we designed 'the flowchart for the assessment of moral education levels' which was designed to measure patriotism, inquisitiveness, diligence, kindness, empathy and self-control.

The following results were obtained.

TABLE 1: THE RESULTS OF THE INITIAL STUDENT ASSESSMENT MEASURED WITH THE USE OF THE FLOWCHART FOR THE ASSESSMENT OF MORAL EDUCATION LEVELS

<i>Questions</i>	<i>Replies</i>					
	<i>I am absolutely sure (%)</i>		<i>I have doubts (%)</i>		<i>I am not sure at all (%)</i>	
	<i>exper- imental</i>	<i>cont- rol</i>	<i>exper- imental</i>	<i>cont- rol</i>	<i>exper- imental</i>	<i>cont- rol</i>
I am often kind towards my peers and adults	72	55,8	28	32	0	2,2
It is important for me to help out classmates when they get into trouble	58	62,3	34	29	8	8,7
I think it is OK to be impolite with some adults	10	13,8	3	12,32	87	73,88
There is nothing bad about being rude with people I dislike	8	9,4	5	19,6	87	71
I think politeness helps me feel comfortable around people	48	58,7	25	16,7	27	24,6
I think it is OK to say something rude to a person who unfairly criticizes me	100	90,6	0	4,3	0	5,1
When someone gets bullied at school I bully that person to along with others	61	78,3	20	21,7	19	0
It gives me pleasure to make people happy	43	39,1	10	16,7	47	44,2
I think it is important to forgive people if they did something wrong	13	16,7	5	16,7	82	66,6
I think it is important to try and understand people even when they are in the wrong	34	71	61	26,1	5	2,9

All in all, at this stage of our experimental work we established that both groups of teenagers had more or less the same level of moral education.

At **the formative level** we introduced special educational conditions to the experimental group which allowed us to reorganize their educational process. These conditions were designed through: the pedagogical integration of knowledge acquisition and moral development in the context of Russian language lessons, literature lessons and history lessons; the application of the learner-centered approach in the work with students, the ethno-pedagogization of educational processes.

The moral orientation of lessons is programmed and ensured when specific goals, questions and tasks are predetermined. They need to be purposefully directed at identifying the moral aspects of actions and processes in the course of their consideration with their consequent assessment, the selection of moral ideals and their realization in one's actions. The communication of teenagers in the context of educational processes which are directed at the moral development of teenagers puts them into real life situations. These situations that involve communication within the context of moral education encourage teenagers to realize the imperfectness of what is around them and to consequently form an aspiration towards redesigning reality and one's relationships in accordance with one's moral ideals. When one accepts moral degradation as normal then it finds its way out to be realized in one's actions. The way of teenage communication organization within educational activities is turned into the way of knowledge integration – into the way of forming highly moral and integral personalities. This way we can deduce a formula of teenage communication that facilitates their knowledge integration.

Directing teenage activities towards moral priorities also somewhat help teenagers choose an occupation: teenagers start seeking an occupation that would allow them to serve and benefit their society and not just to earn as much money as possible with the least amount of effort.

Understanding how influential lessons can be many teachers pay a lot of attention not only to their lessons' didactic provision but also to the creation of a positive educational environment in order to ensure children's development. Moral orientation of a lesson requires teachers to pay close attention to their professional behavior, their assignments, requirements and assessment practices during the lesson. In order to achieve all of that we organized a course 'Morality Hours'.

At the **control stage** we reassessed our participants and compared their results with what was demonstrated at the first stage. The analysis of the results indicated high effectiveness of the developed program which involved: the pedagogical integration of the processes of knowledge acquisition with moral development in the course of Russian language lessons, literature lessons and history lessons; learner-centered approach to the educational process, ethno-pedagogization of educational processes.

As can be seen from the Table 2, the levels of moral education for the control group remained almost unchanged (high – 0/0, medium – 31/39, below medium – 69/65, low – 38/34), whereas for the experimental group there has been obvious progress (high – 0/4, medium – 20/31, below medium – 51/47, low – 29/18).

The analysis of the flowchart for the assessment of moral education levels allowed us to identify certain obstacles that are inhibiting the process of teenagers coming to realize life problems. The level of moral education increased among teenagers due to the integration of knowledge acquisition and moral development in the context of Russian language lessons, literature lessons and history lessons;

TABLE 2: THE RESULTS OF THE STUDENT REASSESSMENT

The levels of moral education	Observing and reporting stage		Formative stage		Control stage	
	Exp. group	Control group	Exp. group	Control group	Exp. group	Control group
High	0	0	1	0	4	0
Moderate	20	31	22	36	31	39
Below moderate	51	69	52	66	47	65
Low	29	38	25	36	18	34

due to the use of the learner-centered approach and the ethno-pedagogization of the educational process.

Moral education comprises three components: knowledge-related, value-related and personality-related – all of which form a complex system. The flowchart for the assessment of moral education levels, consisting of ten questions, demonstrates this very well (Figure 1).

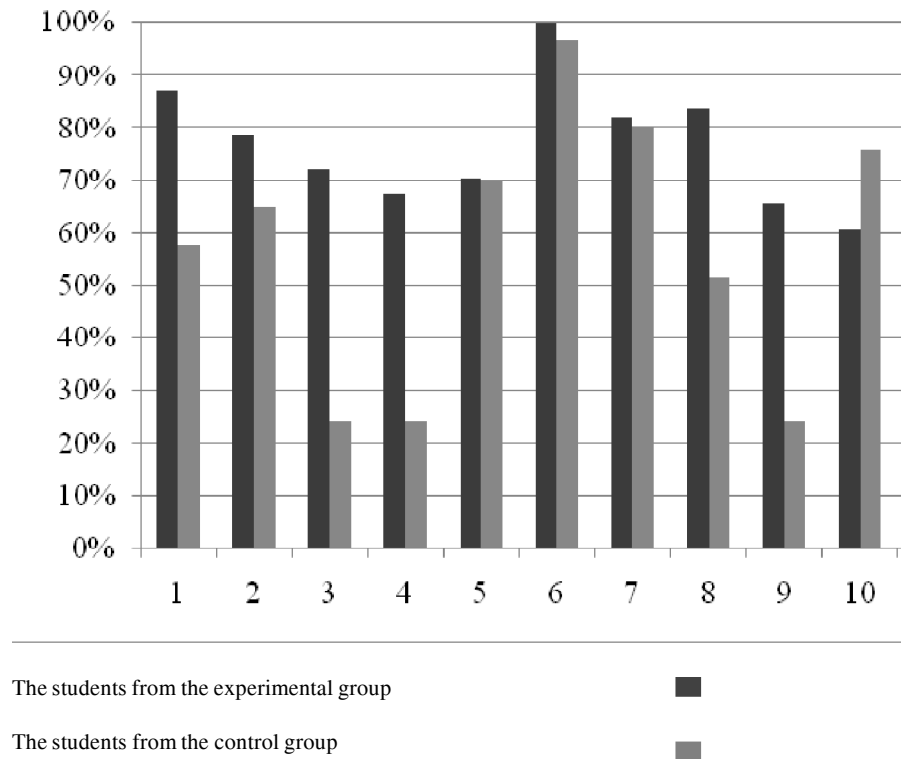


Figure 1: Final diagram of moral education levels (final assessment)

Thus, after synthesizing all of the results we come to the following conclusion: those pedagogical condition that were created in order to facilitate effective moral education for teenagers over the course of humanitarian lessons confirmed our initial hypothesis formulated in the beginning of this article.

DISCUSSIONS

Throughout the human history the issue of moral development has been extremely important. The systems of moral education have always had specific goals, methods, practices and forms of organization that were shaped in accordance with political, economical, social and cultural conditions in society (Gabdrakhmanova, Khodyreva & Torniyova, 2016; Iwasa, 2017).

In the current context, in which material values get prioritized over spiritual and moral values, the system of moral education is going through significant changes. In view of this it is reasonable to thoroughly reconsider the nature of moral education (Copp, 2016).

CONCLUSION

We considered the nature of gradual pedagogical integration (the processes in which the educator enters the educational space of learners, the situations important for learners get modeled, teenagers gradually assume responsibility).

Moreover, we employed a range of methods and approaches to facilitate effective integration of learners into the problem-solving process: creating direct and indirect connections among them, organizing groups of free communication. We also identified the obstacles that prevent teenagers from realizing and considering real life problems. Thus, the results that we obtained over the course of experimental work and then put into tables and figures allow us to argue that the pedagogical condition that were created over the course of our experimental work play significant role in facilitating effective moral education for teenagers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This article might be useful for the educators who seek to improve the moral education component in their educational organization.

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