

## РАЗДЕЛ V ПРОБЛЕМЫ СОВРЕМЕННОЙ ВЫСШЕЙ ШКОЛЫ

### SPIRITUAL AND MORAL EDUCATION IN THE PROCESS OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING

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The article examines the current progress of spiritual and moral education. The concept of spiritual and moral education and its historical basis in the general pedagogical context is analyzed. The practical experience of the Department of the English language for humanities in introducing methods of moral education in the process of teaching foreign languages is described.

**Key words:** spiritual and moral education; personality formation; methods of moral education; the process of foreign language teaching.

### ДУХОВНО-НРАВСТВЕННОЕ ВОСПИТАНИЕ В ПРОЦЕССЕ ОБУЧЕНИЯ ИНОСТРАННОМУ ЯЗЫКУ

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В статье рассматриваются вопросы развития духовно-нравственного воспитания на современном этапе. Анализируется понятие духовно-нравственного воспитания в историческом и общепедагогическом контексте. Описывается практический опыт работы кафедры английского языка гуманитарных факультетов по внедрению методов духовно-нравственного воспитания в процесс обучения иностранным языкам.

**Ключевые слова:** духовно-нравственное воспитание, формирование личности, методы воспитания, процесс обучения иностранным языкам.

According to the education policy in the Republic of Belarus the general aim of education is the formation of knowledge, skills, intellectual, moral, creative and physical development of the student's personality [1, p. 9]. The legal framework and requirements vary depending on the level of education. However, the basis of all levels is spiritual and moral education aimed at the full formation of an individual. Thus, many scholars admit that every individual must be given the possibility of developing his personality

according to his aspirations and aptitudes in order to enable him to engage himself fully in modern society. The education should not only provide with a set of knowledge in scientific, humanistic, or artistic fields, but also foster the development of the “educated person”. The complex aspects of this term should be considered through a holistic approach, broadly defined as “empowerment with language proficiency, general knowledge, social confidence, and moral awareness in order to be economically and civically successful.” [2, p. 16]. In terms of national system of education, we redefine and expand this notion as the potential for personal growth and societal improvement based on universal, humanistic values, cultural and spiritual traditions of the Belarusian people, society and the state. Therefore, it is more preferable to use the notion “moral education” referring to the essential foundation for growing an educated person and guiding the development of future generations.

A retrospective analysis of the concept of morality shows that it has deep roots in the history of education. Moral precepts are mostly ideals that have been worked out by philosophers, religious authorities or other thinkers, although they may have demonstrated their worth in people’s practical experience of life. Morals and moral values are generally associated with a personal view of values, so that they are psychological rather than tangible. They often reflect the influence of religion or philosophy, culture, family and friends.

In ancient Greek philosophy problems of morality were considered through the works of Plato, depicting four “cardinal” virtues (courage, temperance, prudence, and justice) that were a kind of navigator in teaching the younger generation. Immanuel Kant argued that there is a “moral imperative” to treat other people with dignity, and never to exploit them as instruments of one’s own satisfaction. According to John Locke, no one should act in such a way as to harm anyone else’s life, health, liberty or possessions. The Confucian view, that is widely accepted in Asian education system, proposes the construct of “ren” as a broad notion of what is right and good, including moral virtues such as loyalty, consideration, conscientiousness, or altruism.

In modern psychological thinking, acquiring moral values is primarily seen as learning from others. From a psychoanalytic perspective, parents instill morals in children, which become part of the super-ego. These morals may later conflict with innate, self-serving desires, potentially causing psychological distress when personal urges clash with the values imposed by society or family, especially if those urges prioritize individual gain over collective well-being.

However, the most influential modern description of the psychological process of moral development is that of Lawrence Kohlberg, who further developed the work of Jean Piaget. According to Piaget, development is not merely the result of gaining more knowledge, but consists rather of a sequence of qualitative changes in the way an individual thinks [3, p. 178]. This refers to the shift from interpreting events based on their immediate, tangible characteristics to understanding them through abstract, broader principles. At each developmental stage, thinking is structured by the limitations of that stage, meaning moral comprehension advances in tandem with overall cognitive development. Kohlberg proposed that children acquire understandings of concepts such as justice, equality and concern about the welfare of others as they move through a series of six developmental stages [4, p. 25]. At the lowest level, young children define right and wrong in terms of immediate concrete effects on themselves. As children become more cognitively mature, they come to understand that other people have interests that differ from their own, that these may also vary from person to person, and that good and bad reflect an interplay among the array of interests. At the highest level, people understand that morals are higher-order abstract principles that promote smooth functioning of the society at large, and are based on reciprocal relationships marked by characteristics such as trust, loyalty, respect, or gratitude; these protect everyone, not just in the short but also in the long term. There is an understanding that morals such as, for instance, respect for life and human welfare transcend particular cultures, societies and eras.

Thus, the literature review states that moral education encompasses the processes through which individuals develop skills, attitudes, and behaviors aligned with the positive values of the society they live in. It helps people cultivate socially accepted qualities and principles, contributing to their moral and ethical development.

As for tertiary education in Belarus, moral education plays a significant role in shaping students' ethical principles and social responsibilities. It aims to cultivate positive values such as respect, integrity, and civic duty, which are crucial for personal and professional development. Universities integrate moral education into *curricula* through various courses, *extracurricular activities*, and *social initiatives*, ensuring that students not only gain academic knowledge but also develop a strong moral foundation. This approach supports the overall goal of fostering well-rounded individuals who contribute positively to society.

To provide specific examples of how moral education methods are implemented in foreign language teaching, it is advisable to consider the experience of the academic staff of the Department of the English language

for humanities at Belarusian State University and their initiatives and programs that illustrate practical application of diverse ways in which moral and ethical values are cultivated among students in the educational process.

**Moral education as a core part of curriculum.** The content of foreign language teaching is based on the development of professional and personal values of a specialist, covering fundamental ethical theories, moral philosophy, and the specifics of professional ethics relevant to the student's future career. The curriculum for the language training assembles two consecutive units: general English and English for specific (professional) purposes. The main components of each unit aimed not only at the correct mastery of grammatical and stylistic skills, but also at mastering the methods of speech interaction, especially those that are represented by the in-demand communicative skills in real life practice. It is important to preserve the personally oriented context of communication, focusing on moral values, in which almost all students are interested. The variety of activities could include holding educational discussions, engaging in debates, participating in role-playing games, and developing and presenting projects, among other interactive methods.

All curricula developed by the Department prioritize moral education through various social responsibility projects, case competitions, and academic conferences requiring thoughtful moral reflection. One example, mandatory for all new students (unit: general English), involves experiencing life as a freshman and familiarizing themselves with the university, understanding their rights and responsibilities as students, while fostering personal engagement and social responsibility. Students work on projects and create introductory videos to explore their new university environment. They seek to familiarize themselves with the academic staff, university life, and youth organizations, while striving to find their place and achieve notable success.

**Moral education as a part of extracurricular activities.** These activities encourage students to apply moral principles in practical situations, fostering personal growth and social responsibility beyond the classroom. The potential of moral education is most effectively realized through students' involvement in educational research activities. During the English Week (a set of events in English dedicated to various topics under the ideological policy of the state) the Department organizes professional case competitions where students are tasked with solving real-life dilemmas (in the field of economics, history and law) that require careful ethical consideration. Activities like workshops, forums, debates, start-ups and academic conferences encourage students to explore moral values, develop a sense of social justice and responsibility, fostering a feeling of contributing positively to society.

**Moral education as a part of social initiatives.** Given the limited time available for studying foreign languages at non-linguistic universities, it is beneficial to incorporate the humanistic aspects of these languages into social programs, such as environmental initiatives. As a remarkable example is the initiative of the Department in collaboration with students to plant forest in the Pukhovichi district as a part of the Republican voluntary action “Forest Week”.

In summary, issues of moral education in Belarus must adapt to the country's swiftly evolving social environment, incorporate national ethical standards, and maintain national cultural and moral values. Similar to other countries, this process requires ongoing dialogue, discussions, and transformations to ensure that moral education remains pertinent and effectively reflects both national priorities and the future prospects of our country.

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