

## INSTILLING THE IDEAS OF MORALITY IN JUNIOR SCHOOLCHILDREN

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**Abstract:** This paper deals with the problem of instilling ideas of morality in junior schoolchildren in the modern social and pedagogical conditions. The authors analyze the essence of key notions of research, identify the potential of extracurricular activities as a facilitating environment for raising the morality of junior schoolchildren. Fulfillment of the facilitating pedagogical conditions as identified by the authors helps to build a morality-oriented environment supporting co-creativity of teacher and students in the process of instilling the ideas of morality in the junior schoolchildren. The paper presents the data obtained by diagnostics of the morality ideas among junior schoolchildren and the results of fulfillment of the facilitating pedagogical conditions within the pedagogical process.

**Keywords:** junior schoolchild, morality, idea, instilling, morality ideas, pedagogical conditions.

### 1 Introduction

In the present-day sociocultural situation, it becomes paramount to raise the level of morality among the younger generation. Due to this, education of children as the molding of a morally strong personality has become one of the major goals of the modern society. This turns the spotlight on the need to explore the process of instilling the ideas of morality in the junior schoolchildren which lays the foundation for the moral education and development of personality; identification, testing and fulfillment in the open educational space of the facilitating conditions for raising the level of morality among the junior schoolchildren.

The morality ideas are instilled and corrected in the children of junior school age throughout the entire professional input of a teacher, that's why the search for modern techniques of organizing the process explored in this research in the conditions of a educational facility becomes especially relevant.

It is in the junior school age, that children have their first mindful moral judgements and assessments, gain understanding of the meaningful moral processes and motives, which makes this age period highly sensitive for organizing the process of instilling the morality ideas which testifies to the high relevance of this research.

### 2 Literature Review

Attention to the problem of moral education of students is not new in the psychological and pedagogical literature. Researchers are eager to explore methodological and procedural issues of developing the moral structures of the student's personality, effective means of building the moral consciousness and shaping the behavior.

Modern studies focus on various aspects of organizing education of junior students (Antonova et al., 2019; Chiranova et al., 2020; Kuznetsova et al., 2020; Kobozeva et al., 2020; Karpushina et al., 2020), explore the methodologies and methods concerned with molding the moral consciousness of students (Abolin & Valiakhmetov, 2002; Arkhipova & Mikheikina, 2020; Belova et al., 2018; Vasenina et al., 2018a, 2018b), identify the best conditions and technologies of effective training of specialists in the field of education and of other teaching staff to organize the educational process (Kutnyak et al., 2019; Vinokurova et al.,

2018a, 2018b; Spirenkova & Oskina, 2018; Kudashkina et al., 2018; Kuznetsova et al., 2016.; Belyaeva et al., 2018); find the facilitating conditions for developing the educative techniques (Kulebyakina et al., 2018; Mikhalkina et al., 2018; Goryacheva et al., 2020; Kolechenko, 2006; Okolelov, 2015); examine the potential of different methods and pedagogical instruments for moral education of students (Vinokurova et al., 2018a, 2018b; Vasenina et al., 2018a, 2018b).

The analysis of modern scientific research findings led the authors to the assertion based on ideas expressed by researchers (Buyanova et al., 2020; Divnogortseva, 2019; Shityakova & Verkhoviyk, 2020) that the moral education of students may be defined as:

- knowledge of norms, rules of behavior and communication, as well as the ability to apply them as appropriate, to give evaluative judgments to what is happening;
- purposeful efforts of educators to ingrain in students a system of firm ideas and notions of morality, to develop their moral feelings, and to shape their judgements and attitudes that may further guide them in their lives;
- a process that is intended both to mold the moral feelings, moral consciousness and moral behavior, and to prevent any deviations in the moral development of each child;
- a combination of certain conditions and factors for building the need for moral improvement.

The analysis of the literature proves the high relevance and importance of the problem of instilling the ideas of morality in the junior schoolchildren.

### 3 Research Methodological Framework

The purpose of this paper is to identify the potential of extracurricular activities as a facilitating environment for instilling the ideas of morality in the junior schoolchildren.

The stated purpose was achieved by addressing certain objectives: consolidate the theoretical foundations underpinning the process of instilling the ideas of morality in junior schoolchildren; reveal the initial level of morality ideas among junior schoolchildren; reveal and test the facilitating pedagogical conditions for instilling the ideas of morality in junior schoolchildren; measure the effectiveness of the revealed facilitating pedagogical conditions for building the ideas of morality among junior schoolchildren. The research relied on theoretical (analysis of psychological and pedagogical literature, synthesis, consolidation, systematization of publications on the problem of training an education specialist to design the individual roadmap for student, forecasting, comparing, designing) and empirical research methods (pedagogical experiment).

The experiment lasted from 2018 until 2021. The primary classes of the general education facilities in the Republic of Mordovia and the Mordovian State Pedagogical University named after M. E. Evseviev served as the experimental base of research. The experiment involved 320 primary school students, 25 teachers who carry out educational functions in the system of primary general education. The trial part of the experiment was carried out on the basis of Lyceum No. 31, Lyceum No. 26, Secondary General Education School with Advanced Study of Certain Subjects No. 30, Secondary General Education School No. 27, Secondary General Education School No. 1 in the city of Saransk.

The diagnostic tools used at the ascertaining and control stages of the experiment included "Unfinished Situations" (A. M. Schetinina, L. V. Kirs (Schetinina, 2000)); "Finish a Sentence" (N. E. Boguslavskaya); "What We Value Most in People" (L. M. Fridman); "Story-Telling Pictures" (R. M. Kalinina); "How to Behave" (I. B. Dermanova) (Dermanova, 2002); authors' questionnaires intended to find out

the age-specific distinctive features and the level of morality ideas of the respondents.

#### 4 Results and Discussion

The terminological analysis led us to the definition of the moral education as a purposeful and organized process which should result in the system of moral ideas, views, beliefs, values, motives of personal behavior and the higher level of moral development.

Under moral ideas of junior schoolchildren, we mean abstract images from which a positive emotional attitude of the child to the surrounding reality is emerging, which manifests in morally colored actions and behavior.

As a result of the analysis of information sources on the topic of research we have established that "the instilling of moral ideas in junior schoolchildren" should be understood as a process of multifactorial both purposeful and spontaneous impact on the moral sphere of child's personality leading to the emergence of images of memory and imagination, laying the foundation for conceptual apparatus, moral motives of behavior and beliefs of a personality. Therefore, the task of a pedagogical employee is not only a purposeful positive influence on the moral sphere of a personality, but also the correction of the spontaneous influences of external information fields, facilitating the moral growth of a personality. The instilling of moral ideas should be based on the mechanisms that are typical for the molding of values, but not typical for the assimilation of knowledge. The ideas of the junior schoolchildren are formed on the basis of their limited personal experience, assessments and opinions of others, for that reason their main characteristics include simplicity and crudity.

Researchers have defined a range of ideas that can be successfully instilled in the junior school age. In our opinion, the notions which manifestations may be seen as the criteria of formedness of moral ideas in junior schoolchildren and which determine their age specifics include kindness, mercy, obedience, industriousness, friendliness, discipline, unselfishness.

At the ascertaining stage of the experiment (April-May 2018) the control (167 people) and experimental groups (153 people) were formed, comparable by basic characteristics. The level of morality ideas among the junior schoolchildren was examined with the help of diagnostic tools, which allowed to measure the following components of morality ideas:

1. cognitive ("Unfinished Situations" (authors A. M. Schetinina, L. V. Kirs) (Schetinina, 2000), "Unfinished Stories" (author T. P. Gavrilova) (Schetinina, 2000), authors' questionnaires intended to find out the age-specific distinctive features and the level of morality ideas of the respondents);
2. emotion-evaluative ("What We Value Most in People" (author L. M. Fridman); "Story-Telling Pictures" (author R. M. Kalinina) (Dermanova, 2002));
3. activity-volitional ("How to Behave" (author I. B. Dermanova) (Dermanova, 2002), morality-oriented tasks and situations.

The conducted research found that 50% of respondents in both experimental and control groups had the low level of morality ideas; 27.3% in the experimental group and 29.4% in the control group had the medium level; and 22.7% in the experimental group and 20.6% in the control group had the low level. Based on the obtained data, the purposeful efforts were designed and organized to improve the level of morality ideas among the junior schoolchildren.

From September 2018 till May 2021, the formative stage of our experiment took place which involved fulfillment of the identified facilitating conditions in the pedagogical process of the primary school (Lyceum No. 26, Secondary General Education School with Advanced Study of Certain Subjects No. 30):

- integration of information from various fields of knowledge;
- regard for the regional and ethno-confessional specifics;
- selection of the learning content which encourages children's creativity and promotes their right to free choice.

For methodological fulfillment of the identified facilitating conditions (Buyanova et al., 2020), the supplementary general education (general development) program, 'The Beauty of My Soul', was developed and incorporated in the pedagogical process of educational facilities (Lyceum No. 26, Secondary General Education School with Advanced Study of Certain Subjects No. 30). The program conveys the basic understanding of the culture of the people with its centuries-old traditions, the family way of life, and the moral values essential to modern society. The program was divided in three parts: "We and Our Culture", "Our Family" and "Our Values".

We relied on the above-specified facilitating conditions when selecting the learning content for lessons for each part of the program. Having analyzed the results of the joint activities of teachers and students in the experimental class, we revealed the faster inclusion of children in the work on the program at one of the very first lessons on the topic "Beauty in Life and Art" which rather successfully fulfilled the condition of *integration of information from different fields of knowledge*, and as a result we managed to create the emotional climate favorable for discussion, contemplation and opinion exchange. The good foundation for that was the complementary effect of the combination of means: literary, music, artistic. When summarizing the results of this lesson, it was noted that children had extremely strong impressions after they had listened to the recordings of the organ music by Johann Sebastian Bach. Later, in written reviews of this lesson, 25% of students from the experimental group who attended the lesson indicated that the music was extraordinary and they liked it very much. Emotional response to the music was so strong largely because the listening was accompanied with the visuals. But even more important and valuable evidence of significance of integration was the activity of children, which we have noted when analyzing the products of their creativity, which clearly demonstrated improvement in cognitive, emotion-evaluative and activity-volitional components of morality ideas of junior schoolchildren.

As mentioned earlier, the research was conducted on the basis of general education facilities in the Republic of Mordovia. For that reason, the second condition we focused on was the *consideration of regional and ethno-confessional specifics*; we organized lessons which covered the major religious views of the Mordovians, Russians and Tatars (we explored the cultural traditions characteristic of most representatives of these peoples: pagan polytheism of the Mordovians and Russians (the children were provided information about the period preceding Christianization to give them an idea of the uniqueness of each nation and its history), Orthodox Christianity, and Muslims. Great interest among the students was aroused by information about calendar holidays, which were presented in a comparative manner: Trinity - Sabantuy - worshipping the goddess of fertility Angelpatiy; Maslenitsa - Nauruz, etc., with an emphasis on the process of integration of ethnic groups. Thus, fulfillment of the condition consisting in *the consideration of regional and ethno-confessional specifics* made it possible to lay the foundation for further strengthening the respect for the customs, traditions, culture and language of different peoples inhabiting the small motherland; ingraining the morality ideas of good-neighborly relations, friendliness and mercy to one's neighbor, industriousness as a valuable quality of the people.

*Providing children with an opportunity to express and use their creative abilities and the right to free moral choice as a*

facilitating condition for increasing the level of moral ideas among junior schoolchildren, allowed us to diversify the organizational and activity component of the process of instilling the ideas of morality among junior schoolchildren. Moreover, only the learning content selected based on this condition provides opportunities to organize children's activities in such a way that children use their right to offer their solutions to ethical, spiritual problems, corresponding to their worldview, beliefs, specific features of national consciousness and not contradicting the norms of public morality. It was this approach that predetermined the choice of the basic forms of lessons, which were reflexive dialogue and conversational discussion. Initially we had concerns about the appropriateness of such a form of work at primary school, but during the trial of the developed techniques we found that already in the junior school age the first experience of solving moral problems at the level accessible to the students can be acquired, and the chosen forms of lessons prove to be effective subject to a number of conditions which should be considered when designing and organizing activities that promote the ideas of morality.

The level of morality ideas of junior schoolchildren was measured by applying the criteria of their formedness to the outcomes.

During the control stage of the experiment (March-May 2021) a number of diagnostic procedures were performed with participants in the control and experimental groups to determine the level of morality ideas. In the experimental group 39% of participants showed high levels of the ideas of morality, which manifested through understanding of ethical categories, identification of a sufficient number of their correct attributes, the willingness to act in line with the moral standards, the moral aspirations in interactions with others; 38% of participants demonstrated the medium level; 23% of schoolchildren have low level of the ideas of morality. In the control group, the low level was shown by 39%, the medium level - by 36%, and the high level - by 25% of respondents.

## 5 Conclusion

The conducted research led us to the following conclusions.

The instilling of moral ideas in junior schoolchildren should be understood as a process of multifactorial both purposeful and spontaneous impact on the moral sphere of child's personality leading to the emergence of images of memory and imagination, laying the foundation for conceptual apparatus, moral motives of behavior and beliefs of a personality. Therefore, the task of a pedagogical employee is not only a purposeful positive influence on the moral sphere of a personality, but also the correction of the spontaneous influences of external information fields, facilitating the moral growth of a personality.

The results of the ascertaining stage of our experiment revealed that most junior schoolchildren had low level of the ideas of morality, which verified the need to take purposeful efforts directed at improving the level of morality ideas of junior schoolchildren.

The efficient tooling for raising the level of morality ideas of junior schoolchildren is the use of the supplementary general education (general development) program which involves the fulfillment of the following facilitating pedagogical conditions:

- integration of information from various fields of knowledge;
- regard for the regional and ethno-confessional specifics;
- selection of the learning content that encourages children's creativity and promotes their right to free choice.

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