Education and Spirituality in Kazakhstan: "Self-cognition" Metadiscipline Features and Methods of Teaching

Aigerim Mynbayeva\textsuperscript{a*}, Nazgul Anarbek\textsuperscript{b}, Mensulu Yesseyeva\textsuperscript{c}

\textsuperscript{a}Al-Farabi Kazakh National University, Almaty, Kazakhstan, \texttt{Aigerim.Mynbaeva@kaznu.kz}

\textsuperscript{b}Al-Farabi Kazakh National University, Almaty, Kazakhstan, \texttt{nazanar@gmail.com}

\textsuperscript{c}Kazakh State Women's Teacher Training University, Almaty, Kazakhstan
Introduction

• New ideas of the 21st century pedagogy and humane pedagogy are being gradually introduced into mass Kazakhstani school, along with methodology and teaching methods being updated. The introduction of Self-Cognition subject became an important new milestone in updating secondary education content in Kazakhstan.

• **The purpose of the subject** is child's development and harmonious development of his/her intellectual and moral capacities.

• **Purpose of Research** - generalization of teaching experience in the new school subject of Self-Cognition and establishing didactic bases for Self-Cognition teaching strategies being the realization of the new century pedagogics.
Methodology

• **Research Methods:** Observation and generalization of innovative teachers’ experience in Self-Cognition, comparison of combined lesson structures with the lesson of Self-Cognition, systematization and analysis of new learning strategies, student interviews to conclude whether they have developed an understanding of the new bases of pedagogical science, structure of Self-Cognition subject planning, differences when compared to other school disciplines.
The main principle of humanization of education is to return to the origins of a holistic perception of an individual.

The principle of universal value identification, according to which Self-Cognition subject content shall be based on the eternal universal values.

Moral and spiritual education, carried out within the Self-Cognition subject teaching is not religious but secular education, treating physical, mental, spiritual and moral nature of a man in the unity thereof. Absolute universal values that are inherent in a man since birth are Truth, Love, Righteous Behavior (Duty), Inner Peace (Peace), Non-violence.
The Tree of Values

- Non-violence
- Love
- Inner Peace
- Righteous Behavior (Duty)
- TRUTH

Non-violence

Love

Inner Peace

Righteous Behavior (Duty)

TRUTH

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# Results

## Self-Cognition lesson structure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Greeting</th>
<th>Positive thinking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Home assignment review</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quote of the lesson</td>
<td>Conversation – Storytelling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative teamwork</td>
<td>Singing together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home assignment and conclusion</td>
<td>Concluding element of the lesson – a moment of peacefulness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Analysis:
- analysis to identify universal values and storyline, i.e. focus on personal development;
- focus on value-semantic development of each student;
- outcomes – spiritual and moral education, unity of thoughts, words and actions, value-based approach to the world.

## Advantages:
Faith in humanistic principles;
realization of social constructivism, pedagogy of existentialism, environmental pedagogy, “living the moment”;
storytelling strategy (parables), showing videos;
practicing relaxing techniques, purification of mind, development of intuitive reasoning;
possibility to employ coaching practices – strong open questions, the Wizard’s, the Wise Elder’s, the Friend’s coaching tones (M. Atkinson, 2015); outcome frames, etc.

## Risks
- depends on teacher’s personality – his/her spiritual culture, pedagogical and psychological background knowledge and competencies, pedagogical creativeness;
- technical equipment of classrooms;
- artificially favorable school environment may decrease students’ adaptability in real-life competitive community outside the school.
Implications for Practice

• It is recommended to include few cognitive concepts (perhaps just foundations of social, emotional intellect) into senior grades curriculum, to take advantage of the cognitive approach and social constructivism, expand the use of art technologies, to teach resilience and coping behavior. Thus, it is possible to expand the content and expected results from learning the lesson by real-life behavioral skills.
Conclusion

- Introduction of Self-Cognition subject corresponds to the pedagogy of the 21st century, and allows providing for the development of intelligence and spirituality concepts. This is important under forward looking education focusing on the progress of science, the creation of new breakthrough technologies, and space exploration. Lesson designing applies modern storytelling strategy, value-based education, coaching, and relaxation. Actual use of psychological relaxation techniques, reference and orientation to Jung's theory, humanistic psychology of A. Maslow and K. Rogers, neuro-linguistic programming theory, M. Csikszentmihalyi’s Flow Theory and others.
Conclusion

• **Teachers certified** by Bobek National Scientific, Practical, and Wellness Center are allowed to teach Self-Cognition.

• Of course, to conduct a lesson, apart from Self-Cognition program a teacher should possess good axiological culture, a rich inner world, constantly pursue inner spiritual work; be able to attract different students to dialogue, to argue. The educator must be a role model of a person living in the unity of thought, word and deed.

• It is important for the teacher to master the art of combing lesson blocks by theme as a storyline based on the principle of identifying the universal values, and to be able to make transitions with a focus on the subject and value. In fact, it is more like a role of writer and director rather than teacher.
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