

THE LATIN LANGUAGE IN MEDICAL EDUCATION: ETHICAL AND PEDAGOGICAL ASPECTS

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The article investigates the ethical and pedagogical dimensions of education, specifically using the process of teaching Latin in medical schools as a case study. This outlines the core principles of pedagogical ethics and the professional code of conduct for university teachers. The results of a survey given to first-year students at the Department of Foreign Languages of Yaroslavl State Medical University (YSMU) regarding the teacher's role in education are analyzed. The issue of what students look for in the personality of an ideal university teacher is being discussed. The study of Latin must be used to equip students with proper terminological skills, widen their intellectual horizons, and raise their general cultural literacy. The author stresses the essential mission of a modern teacher, noting that teaching skills and moral guidance cannot be separated.

Keywords: pedagogical ethics, teacher's ethical code, terminological literacy, general cultural significance of the Latin language, and ethical foundations of the future doctor's professional culture

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ЛАТИНСКИЙ ЯЗЫК В МЕДИЦИНСКОМ ОБРАЗОВАНИИ: ЭТИКО-ПЕДАГОГИЧЕСКИЕ АСПЕКТЫ

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В статье рассматриваются этико-педагогические аспекты образовательного процесса на примере преподавания латинского языка в медицинском вузе. Выделены основные положения педагогической этики, этического кодекса преподавателя университета. Приводится анализ результатов анкетного опроса студентов-первокурсников на тему «Роль преподавателя в учебном процессе», проведенного на кафедре иностранных языков ЯГМУ. Обсуждаются мнения студентов относительно личных качеств идеального преподавателя университета. Отмечается необходимость формирования терминологической грамотности обучающихся, расширения их кругозора и повышения общекультурного уровня в ходе изучения латинского языка. Автор подчеркивает важность миссии, возложенной на современного преподавателя, и неразрывную связь профессионального обучения и нравственного воспитания.

Ключевые слова: педагогическая этика, этический кодекс преподавателя, терминологическая грамотность, общекультурное значение латинского языка, этические основы профессиональной культуры будущего врача

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The theoretical roots of Russian pedagogical ethics were established by K. D. Ushinsky, the father of Russian pedagogy. He asserted that “shaping a student's moral character is the ultimate purpose of education, which is far more important than just expanding their knowledge...” [1].

P. F. Kaptelev, a follower of K. D. Ushinsky and pioneer of educational psychology, realized the educational goals and theories that Ushinsky was unable to finish during his lifetime. He showed that education and moral growth go hand in hand. “A teacher cannot simply act as an instructor in front of their students and stop being a human”. Teachers “influence students through their core human values just as much as through their teaching methods” [2].

In the tradition of K. D. Ushinsky, P. F. Kaptelev, and their contemporaries, Russian pedagogy frames advanced educational concepts within the discipline of pedagogical ethics. The foundational pillars of this approach are “...morality, the teacher's moral culture, moral engagement, and the ethics of moral decision-making” [3]. By definition, pedagogical

ethics centers on the teacher's individual morality and their ethical responsibilities in practice. “The teacher's personality is the heart of teaching; its profound impact on a young mind is a powerful tool that cannot be replaced by books, moral lectures, or reward and punishment systems” [1].

RESEARCH METHODS

This article aims to analyze ethical aspects of teacher-student interactions at medical universities, focusing on experiences in teaching Latin during the foundational stage of medical education. This analysis, based on the Vox studentium (Voice of students) questionnaire, reveals what students expect from their teachers and how they evaluate teaching performance.

To evaluate whether a medical university's Latin teacher met ethical pedagogical standards, we asked first-year students about the teacher's role in the classroom. A total of 100 medical, pediatric, and dental students completed the survey.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The survey results provided the following information. A large majority of surveyed students (93%) emphasized the importance of the teacher's role in their academic discipline. Furthermore, 51% of students highly valued well-structured and properly executed lessons, as this directly drives their comprehension and retention of the subject matter. Additionally, 25% emphasized the importance of engaging with teachers who both "teach and educate", while 9% cherished the teacher's role, noting that "a teacher's character and behavior serve as an educational tool".

An identical percentage (8%) emphasized the importance of interaction with a teacher, which may "preview how they will communicate with coworkers in the future". Nevertheless, 7 individuals did not respond to our query: three found it unanswerable, while four others chose textbook study over direct communication with a teacher.

Unfortunately, we couldn't interview the students who successfully learn Latin independently because the survey was anonymous. We would certainly like to understand our errors that have contributed to the teaching profession receiving less recognition. To find out, we asked students: "What does the ideal modern teacher look like to you?" A 53% majority of the students surveyed believe teachers must be well-educated experts of high moral character who are skilled in contemporary teaching methods. 29% of surveyed individuals expect teachers to engage and inspire students, while 14% highly value teachers who show a supportive approach to students' challenges. Only 4% of participants were unsure how to answer this question.

We also asked our students which professional and personal qualities they value most in a teacher. The response rate for this question was 78% among the surveyed students. The most commonly cited traits included professionalism, high standards, fairness, and kindness, the ability to personalize teaching, sense of responsibility, strong communication skills, and tact, along with a genuine passion for their work and students. According to our students, these are the traits of the perfect university teacher.

Alongside the essential personal attributes, a university teacher must also provide meaningful guidance to their students. First-year students frequently experience a sense of insecurity, notably when encountering novel academic disciplines like Latin. They rely on us for support, including answering questions about the curriculum, recommending study materials, offering preparation tips, etc. We must recognize that students carefully assess every word we say and the tone we use. Our task is to inspire and motivate, not demotivate. For this reason, we never tell students: "You are going to fail, you won't write it, and you won't make it". We will offer them support, including verbal one, guiding them toward effectively overcoming their challenges.

BASIC PROVISIONS OF PEDAGOGICAL ETHICS

Educational ethics require that teachers and students always treat each other with respect. In our view, referring to students informally is unacceptable — a practice we regretfully sometimes observe among our peers in the department. Let's remember that we are educating the next generation of doctors — our future colleagues. Research indicates that 90% of surveyed students support beginning professional medical training in their first year. They are eager to advance their intellectual, cultural, and professional capabilities to become highly moral, educated, and competent practitioners [4]. Thus, addressing the audience as "dear colleagues", which we do from time to time, feels quite appropriate.

Let's briefly outline what the phrase "education through the subject" means. P. F. Kaptelev highlighted that "educational curricula across all disciplines should be intentionally designed to facilitate the ethical development of learners, regardless of the extent" [2]. Although learning Latin builds universal skills, mastering medical terminology in the first year lays the groundwork for clinical competencies and shapes the professional vocabulary the future doctors will use throughout their medical career. Medical terminology operates as an interconnected network of vocabularies, which is broadly divided into three main branches: anatomical terminology, clinical terminology, and pharmaceutical terminology [5].

Both teachers and learners should focus on understanding foundational medical vocabulary and developing terminological literacy, enabling students to use professional medical language accurately and confidently in their specific fields [6]. It is essential to emphasize that our goal is to cultivate a professional culture in future physicians, characterized by deep respect for patients, colleagues, and the medical vocation itself (*medicina nobilissima*). Among qualified, ethical medical professionals, any grammatical, lexical, or terminological errors are completely unacceptable. We try to emphasize this to our students when we discover major mistakes, such as confusing the medical prefixes *hypo-* and *hyper-*, or misusing and incorrectly explaining the suffixes *-osis* and *-itis* in their clinical case studies. Although we don't expect first-year students to give exact scientific definitions of clinical terms, we must make sure they acquire terminological fluency from their very first Latin lessons.

Broad cultural awareness is an essential educational goal, and studying Latin allows to achieve this across the curriculum. Memorizing aphorisms and professional axioms broadens your horizons and enhances your cultural and intellectual development.

We teach our medical students several foundational Latin aphorisms that focus on the issues of life and death, patient wellness, and the ethical conduct of a physician. We place a strong emphasis on proverbs that embody the moral and professional duties of healthcare providers (*Primum noli (non) nocere!* translated as *To help, or at least, to do no harm* (the first commandment of a doctor); *Aliis inserviendo consumor* translated as *I burn serving others* (the burning candle or lamp serves as the symbolic emblem of healing) [7]. We propose discussing aphorism content in class, in addition to preparing reports and presentations for the meeting of Latin department's Student Research Society. Our students are eager to take advantage of these offers and join events organized by Latin departments at other universities across Russia.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, we stress that pedagogical ethics essentially functions as a teacher's code of conduct. This code or professional educational practice is regulated by local and federal laws, and fundamentally relies on the teacher's strong personal values and ethical principles. Teachers of Latin at medical universities utilize the intrinsic content of the discipline to foster the ethical foundations of a future physician's professional culture at the initial stage of medical education via both curricular and extracurricular activities.

A teacher's mission is successfully accomplished when the principal rules of pedagogical ethics are fully integrated into the educational process: "Learning environments founded on mutual respect, trust, and understanding naturally inspire students, allowing them to experience the joy of creative exploration and scientific discovery..." [2].

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