

Category of “upbringing” in M.M. Speransky educational system

Categoría de “educación” en M.M. Sistema educativo Speransky

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ABSTRACT

M.M. Speransky is a famous Russian public and political figure. However, his activities were not limited to political issues. His pedagogical activity is studied poorly. The basic principles of the younger generation upbringing were laid during the seminar period, which coincided in time with the pedagogical activity by M. Speransky. The success of Speransky's pedagogical system is evidenced by the fact that he was invited as an educator to the royal family. The basic principles of Speransky's pedagogy were the following ones: the authority of a teacher, but the lack of authoritarianism, the interaction with a student in the search for the right educational solutions, the attachment to the students and responsibility for them.

Keywords: education, M.M. Speransky, interaction with students in the learning process, attachment to students.

RESUMEN

M.M. Speransky es una famosa figura pública y política rusa. Sin embargo, sus actividades no se limitaron a cuestiones políticas. Su actividad pedagógica es poco estudiada. Los principios básicos de la educación de la generación más joven se establecieron durante el período del seminario, que coincidió en el tiempo con la actividad pedagógica de M. Speransky. El éxito del sistema pedagógico de Speransky se evidencia por el hecho de que fue invitado como educador a la familia real. Los principios básicos de la pedagogía de Speransky fueron los siguientes: la autoridad de un maestro, pero la falta de autoritarismo, la interacción con un estudiante en la búsqueda de las soluciones educativas correctas, el apego a los estudiantes y la responsabilidad por ellos.

Palabras clave: educación, M.M. Speransky, interacción con los alumnos en el proceso de aprendizaje, apego a los alumnos.

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Introduction

The pedagogical activity by M.M. Speransky during the seminar period was based on the documents developed during the inception of the Russian elementary school under Catherine II. The teacher duties included an indispensable condition "to take the place of the parents among the pupils" if the parents were not able to help "in the admonition of their children". The title of a teacher obliged "to try to make useful members of society from students" - this was the motto of that period, and therefore the teacher tried to "educate the minds of students and teach how to think and act rationally, honestly, and decently" [11: p. 250-251].

As a true Christian, M.M. Speransky carefully followed his teacher's duty, for he knew that a mentor who was not performing his duties "sinned before God, before the government, before the student parents, when they are cared badly, and most importantly before himself" [Ibid].

It is repeatedly noted that M.M. Speransky was notable for impeccable performance of his duties; consequently, he was flawless in his pedagogical work. The young teacher loved his position and was proud of it, and he told about this in his poem "My Happiness". He served as a model of decency, humanity, accuracy, conscientious attitude for his students, – a kind and responsive educator.

Problem discussion.

1. The basic principles of the educational system by M.M. Speransky. The union of the teacher and the students was built on the basis of harmonious relationships that were born during the interaction. The teacher, who had barely stepped over the twenty-year milestone, was able to "rise to the spiritual world" of his charges, was able to feel the children subtly and penetrate their inner world, because he did not have time to forget that he was a student in the recent past. He knew his listeners, noticed their peculiarities and inclinations, because without this he did not consider it possible to be a real tutor and educator.

M.M. Speransky has always been against violent measures in education, in politics, and in everyday life. "In all cases of life, I consider meek and condescending measures to be the fairest ones", he said. Carefully observing and studying the team, he tried to be delicate, pointing out the mistakes and delusions of his students with great tact. He followed F. Fenelon in this, whom he greatly valued as a writer and a teacher, whose ideas laid the foundation of his pedagogical humanism. Fenelon's democratic views are reflected in the pedagogical discourses on upbringing. The thinker rejected authoritarianism in communication and parenting of children and considered it necessary to ensure the natural, free development of a child. He is one of the first teachers of the New Time, who left systematic reflections on women's education in the treatise "On the education of girls" [1680]. Fenelon pointed out that in relation to young children tenderness and affection should be combined skillfully, at the same time it is necessary to make them get accustomed to patience. He advised to alternate the game and study, to avoid excessive didacticism during learning. In moral education, he recommended teaching the child to be honest and sincere [3].

The feeling of attachment to their students is one of the defining features of M.M. Speransky's pedagogical culture. Hence the desire to help them in their education, mastering the subject, the constant urge to do something for their better preparation: writing a textbook, recommendation to get acquainted with some author or just a personal story and the explanation of an issue that occupies his pupil's mind. Without constant spiritual communication between the teacher and the student, without mutual penetration into the world of thoughts, feelings and interests of each other, without spiritual sensitivity, compassion and responsiveness to others' joys and sorrows, the teacher Speransky did not think to achieve any success in the matter of education.

A personal example of decent behavior, sincerity of intonation in communication and spiritual simplicity distinguished M.M. Speransky from the very beginning of his teaching activities, which attracted the hearts of students of different ages and social backgrounds. He knew how to open the unknown world of things and events before the young people with an amazing story about extraordinary natural phenomena in physics lessons and thereby engender in their students' minds an interest to know the world around them, taught them to feel the beauty of heaven and earth, and taught them to learn.

According to M.M. Speransky learning is the part of a rich spiritual life that contributes to the enrichment of mind, not by dull mechanical memorization, but by reflection and observation [2].

The teacher believed that reading is one of the origins of thinking and mental development, and advised his students to read thoughtfully, with a pencil in hand. He considered reading as a very subtle tool for mastering knowledge, for there were no other learning tools that modern students use in abundance. A book was supposed to be a friend, a mentor and a wise teacher for each student.

All this was realized by Speransky himself, he loved reading and drew many wisdom from the books since his childhood. In the “Rules of Higher Eloquence”, the teacher of rhetoric writes the following: “Show me your friends, one of the ancient says, and I will know your morals. Show me your books, and I will determine the nature of your enlightenment: the greatest fruit of reading is to open our own concepts, or to give them a chance to get annoyed” [10: p.101].

He continues that “Great writers share their minds with us, raise our imagination, and gradually teach us to see and feel, as they see and feel” [Ibid: p.102].

To instill the taste for reading, the teacher, first of all, turned to the teachers of humanity, urging students to learn the mastery of the word from them: “Tender and sensitive souls will always like Virgil and Omir; they will always be obsessed with Jung, and Lomonosov, and shed tears with Racine. I testify by all the experience of entire centuries. Despite the difference of morals and the ways of thinking, despite the distance that separates you from Cicero and Horace, they will always be our models; due reverence to their sacred monuments will never die out in their hearts until the mind has its rights over people and the course of passions and feelings will not change” [10: p. 70-71].

The mastery of the pen and the word, the ability to speak lucidly and convincingly, contributed to the conduct of conversations-classes in an interesting and entertaining way. Like a real orator, M.M. Speransky demonstrated his art of pronouncing a word, capable of penetrating into the soul and mind of the listener not only with the text of an essay, but also with his voice, face, intonation, and hand. The teacher spoke with the listeners by “the language of movement and appearance” so that every thought would reach all students together and individually, glancing at them, one by one, “to make the impression that he tells this each student individually.”

Skillfully drawn up lesson or lecture plan pursued the goal that both the introduction and “proof”, and the conclusion were subordinated to the same idea and corresponded to a given topic, as the subject of study required.

Attention is drawn to the individuality in the methodology of Speransky’s teaching. His word is a sermon that must be listened carefully in order to be filled with its ideas. Speransky – teacher speech was even and smooth, had colorful epithets and synonyms. This ease of speech came from the clarity of thought, the ability to find an appropriate expression in the word. The harmony of thoughts and words is the most important quality in the pedagogical skill by M.M. Speransky. In everything, where the word serves as an intermediary between people, and especially in teaching, it is methodically inexpedient to say too much or say too little. The word was always “according to the growth of thought” for the teacher Speransky during his work in the seminary, and the following years of his teaching.

The voice, tone and vocabulary, the manner of reading - the totality of his teaching tools and techniques indicated that everything he said was carefully thought out, weighed and received its real form. That is why his thoughts and knowledge were poured into the minds of his listeners smoothly and consistently.

Listening to his lectures, the students felt that a person was talking to them, who knew and thought a lot, who put his knowledge into a harmonious order, into an integral world outlook. The continuous work of a tireless mind prompted him to follow all the innovations of both foreign literature, historical and political sciences, and current international events with the aim of his pupil introduction to social and cultural life.

Unfortunately, during his life M.M. Speransky did not publish his textbooks, because he was of an extremely modest opinion about them up to the injustice. His guides were presented in handwritten versions; nevertheless, the student’s thought was not only awakened, but was also formed without feeling the pressure of the teacher’s authority. Year by year, M.M. Speransky’s pedagogical authority grew: with the development of public education, the organization of new educational institutions and in the process of socially significant activities - from the teacher and educator of the seminary to the organizer and the leader of the work on the compilation of the “Complete Law Collection” in the Second Division of His Own Imperial Majesty Office.

The teacher’s professional expertise, teaching skills, the gift of mastering the word, the ability to persuade, educate and encourage have influenced the development of the teacher’s authority. The unifying principle in the “teacher-student” dyad was the process of learning, which is considered as the basis of joint activities.

Personal characteristics of the teacher, his moral, ethical, aesthetic and Christian qualities, cultural component (erudition, interests, communication style and social significance) contributed to the strengthening of his pedagogical authority.

Culture plays a huge role in the overall structure of teacher importance; it is an integral part of the personal

qualities of an educator, it serves as a kind of catalyst for authoritative relationship development. The ability to be a leader and authority simultaneously was equally important in the educational activities by M.M. Speransky. This dual unity allowed him to solve the functional tasks in his activities and to make a significant educational impact on others.

The main task of a teacher-organizer, an educator, a leader is the correct ability to use the power given to him, which largely depends on the spiritual and moral culture, such personal qualities as justice and tact. Possessing such qualities, M. Speransky undoubtedly remained an authoritative and respected person in the state, recognized as a humanist educator and a brilliant teacher, throughout his socio-cultural and educational activities.

2. M.M. Speransky is an educator and a teacher in the royal family. The royal family had high confidence in the educator, appreciated his professional competence, inviting M.M. Speransky as a mentor to the heir of the throne in 1834.

On the instructions of Nicholas I, M.M. Speransky prepared Tsarevich Alexander Nikolaevich to take an oath of allegiance upon reaching adulthood, introduced him into the course of the history of Russian legislation, the essence of laws, their division into different types [6: p.345]. The mentor prepared four “conversations”, which were detailed lectures that suggested the “Socratic” method of a dialogue conduct between a teacher and a student. According to M.A. Korf, “these were the conversations in the full sense, but the conversations were not between a scholastic teaching professor with a student following his lectures, sometimes only to pass the exam, but between the teacher who deeply studied the life of Russia in practice, with his future Monarch, eagerly listening to the science of kings and rulers” [Ibid: p.345].

Wise with life experience, owning effective methods of training and education, an innovator-transformer, a scientist-analyst and a passionate publicist who was at the highest level of his personal development, inspired the thought of the need for decisive changes in Russia. The teacher put in the student not only his soul, but also his beliefs, everything that was found in his genius mind. The reformer himself, he aroused the same thirst for reform in his royal pet, and his lessons were not wasted” [5: p. 303].

The relationship between the mentor and the young student was very warm and trusting. Professional skills and moral standards of life were presented by the teacher in an unobtrusive way. M.M. Speransky, with his gift of words and clarity of thoughts, captured the attention of the curious heir to the throne easily. Moreover, at that time (from 1835 to 1837) he was no longer constrained by current affairs or everyday problems. There was such a space for his knowledge, for his thoughts, for his spiritual movements, that was not there when M.M. Speransky was fully engaged in his career. Now he could speak frankly, freely, and could be himself in his declining years. Subsequently, these “conversations” served as the material for the publication of a book, a guide to jurisprudence, which was used for many years by the students of civil and military educational institutions of Russia.

The mentor drew up a detailed plan for the trip of the heir to the throne in Russia, including Siberia, outlined the routes so that the crown prince could familiarize himself in detail with the vast country that he had to rule. The text of the oath written by M.M. Speransky. In the name of God Almighty, I promise and swear to serve His Imperial Majesty, the Most Gracious Sovereign, my parent, in the name of my God, faithfully and impersonally, and obey everything, not sparing my stomach, to the last drop of blood.

A vivid example of a properly learned science of jurisprudence can be the answer by Alexander II to the question posed by the teacher: – “Should I forgive offenses?”. The heir to the throne responded as follows: – “The offenses made to us personally must be forgiven undoubtedly, but the offenses inflicted by the law of the people must be judged by the laws. The existing law should not make exceptions for anyone”. Mentor educated his ward in the spirit of uncompromising adherence to the law, which is “one for all”.

Professor A.V. Romanovich-Slovatinsky writes the following about the lessons by M.M. Speransky and its results: “The lessons of the great mentor were not in vain: Emperor Alexander II renewed Russia with reforms that Speransky did not dream of” [7: p.35].

The grateful pupil, Alexander II, during the centenary of the teacher-jurist birth honored his bright memory with attention and prayer and preserved the basic precepts of his famous educators, Zhukovsky and Speransky, for many years as well as the properties developed by his educators: gentleness, kindness, “complacent and gentleness”.

3. The influence of M.M. Speransky’s educational system on youth.

State activity, thoughts, feelings, pedagogical views of M.M. Speransky had a great influence on the “new” youth of the 20-ies of the XIX-th century. The Decembrists dreamed – in case of success of their “speech” – to invite the enlightener to the government, as a man of knowledge, enjoying the glory of a flawless citizen, regarding

themselves as his students to some extent.

M.M. Speransky was among the first “Decembrist candidates” as state leaders. According to the final plan of the uprising, developed by the leaders of the Northern Society, he was supposed to be the part of the future interim government along with N.S. Mordvinov and G.S. Batenkov.

Special relations connected him with a talented young engineer of the railway corps G.S. Batenkov, who became his closest employee and “an expert in the theory of legislation” under the guidance of his mentor. The political views of G.S. Batenkov, who brought him together with Bestuzhevs’, Ryleyevs’ brothers and many other members of the secret society in St. Petersburg, were formed under the guidance of his teacher. He said with gratitude that he owed Speransky “the best days of life, the most sublime senses of soul, the development of the mind”. Passing through life’s trials, twenty years after the death of his teacher, he repeated again: “I owe a lot to him for my thoughts and feelings” [8: p.206].

By virtue of workload and extraordinary employment, Mikhail Mikhailovich Speransky did not summarize his views and pedagogical “developments” in special works. His views on pedagogy, education and upbringing are scattered in letters, decrees, and regulations. They are most fully represented in the “Patent of nobility of the Tsarskoye Selo Lyceum” and in the note “On the development of the general national education” [9: p.329].

Conclusions. The versatility of knowledge, the softness of character, constant goodwill, love for his work and children - these are the features and components of M.M. Speransky’s unusual pedagogical talent. Speransky’s skills as a teacher and an educator, depended on the combination of his professional and general humanitarian competence:

- deep knowledge of the subject; the ability to attract students with his knowledge and professional excellence;
- high level of general culture and erudition;
- the ability to manage the cognitive activity of students, to awaken independent thinking and research interests in them;
- subtle observation, which allows to understand a student’s personality, the ability to penetrate into the inner world of a young person, adequately perceiving and understanding his psychology;
- the ability to establish friendly relations with the audience on the basis of its age and social characteristics;
- the ability to express his thoughts and beliefs clearly: to demonstrate his skills as an educator and professional skills;
- the presence of pedagogical tact: the ability to find the strongest educational methods of influence on students, giving preference to “meek and indulgent measures.

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