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Philosophical, historical, and cultural aspects of humanitarian training in the educational environment

Abstract: In the Ukrainian higher education system, in addition to challenges such as the impact of COVID-19, quarantine measures, and the Russian invasion, there are trends such as a flood of information that is not easy to absorb, and the prevalence of multi-subject courses that break interdisciplinary coherence and promote fragmented understanding and technocentric thinking instead of a holistic worldview. A broader shift in education toward personal and cognitive development is underscored by the saturation of the curriculum with specialized subjects. The study of innovative teaching methodologies in this context seems appropriate and justified. The study subject is the consideration of creative teaching methods from the viewpoint of the humanistic concept of education. The purpose is the analysis of research issues of humanization of education, and the emergence and separation of disciplines with a focus on universal values. The article analyzes and considers such trends in the Ukrainian higher education system as the explosion of information and the spread of multidisciplinary courses, disrupting interdisciplinary coherence and promote fragmented understanding and technocentric thinking instead of a holistic view of the world. A broader shift in education toward personal and cognitive development is underscored by the saturation of the curriculum with specialized subjects. The study of innovative teaching methodologies in this context seems appropriate and justified. The authors emphasize that the main task of humanization and humanization of education is to immerse people in reaching humanitarian culture in the educational framework and various student engagement forms. This will counteract the one-dimensional nature of the individual imposed by professional specialization and promote a more holistic development. The historical context of the term defines “humanistic” as a reflection of a value system that uplifts people by providing policies and institutions that promote human well-being, happiness, justice, and empowerment. Thus, “humanitarian” refers to professions, focusing on understanding and interpreting human behavior, spirituality, and cultural phenomena. The final version notes that humanism is a dynamic worldview that evolves and is subject to diverse interpretations in different social groups and cultures, including differences between Western and Eastern perspectives. The debate about humanism in education continues unabated in the context of Ukraine, forming its identity according to Western models.

Keywords: humanization of education, humanization, identity formation, value system, personality needs, humanistic education.



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Філософські та історико-культурні аспекти гуманітарної підготовки фахівців в освітньому середовищі

Анотація: В українській системі вищої освіти, крім таких проблем, як вплив COVID-19, карантинні заходи та російське вторгнення, існують такі тенденції, як потік інформації, яку нелегко засвоїти, і переважання багатосуб'єктних курсів, які порушують міждисциплінарну узгодженість і сприяють фрагментарному розумінню і техноцентричне мислення замість цілісного світогляду. Насичення навчальної програми спеціалізованими предметами підкреслює більш широкий зсув в освіті, спрямований на особистісний і когнітивний розвиток. Вивчення інноваційних методик викладання в цьому контексті видається доречним і виправданим. Предметом дослідження є розгляд інноваційних методів навчання з точки зору гуманістичної концепції освіти. Метою дослідження є аналіз проблем гуманізації освіти, появи і виділення дисциплін з акцентом на загальнолюдські цінності. У статті проаналізовано та розглянуто такі тенденції системи вищої освіти України, як сплеск інформації та поширеність багатопредметних курсів, які порушують міжпредметну узгодженість, сприяючи фрагментованому розумінню та техноцентричному мисленню замість цілісного світогляду. Насиченість навчального плану спеціалізованими предметами підкреслює ширший зсув в освіті як до особистісного, так і до когнітивного розвитку. Дослідження інноваційних методологій навчання в цьому контексті виглядає доцільним та виправданим. Автори підкреслюють, що головним завданням гуманізації та гуманітаризації освіти є занурення людей у багатство гуманітарної культури в освітніх рамках і різних формах залучення студентів, що дозволить протидіяти одновимірній природі особистості, нав'язаній професійною спеціалізацією, сприяючи більш цілісному розвитку. Історичний контекст розгляду концепту визначає «гуманістичний» як відображення системи цінностей, яка підносить людей, передбачаючи дії та інституції, спрямовані на сприяння добробуту людей, щастя, справедливості та розширення можливостей, таким чином «гуманітарний» відноситься до професій, зосереджених на розумінні та інтерпретації людської поведінки, духовності та культурних феноменів. В кінцевому варіанті зазначається, що гуманізм являє собою динамічний світогляд, який розвивається з часом і підлягає різноманітним інтерпретаціям у різних соціальних групах і культурах, включаючи відмінності між західноєвропейською та східною перспективами. У контексті України, яка формує свою ідентичність за західними зразками, дебати навколо гуманізму в системі освіти не вичерпані.

Ключові слова: гуманізація освіти, гуманітаризація, формування ідентичності, система цінностей, потреби особистості, гуманістичне виховання.



Introduction

In the Ukrainian higher education system, in addition to challenges such as the impact of COVID-19, quarantine measures, and the Russian invasion, there are trends such as a flood of information that is not easy to absorb, and the prevalence of multi-subject courses that break interdisciplinary coherence and promote fragmented understanding and technocentric thinking instead of a holistic worldview. A broader shift in education toward personal and cognitive development is underscored by the saturation of the curriculum with specialized subjects. The study of innovative teaching methodologies in this context seems appropriate and justified.

The study subject is the consideration of innovative teaching methods from the point of view of the humanistic concept of education.

The purpose is the analysis of research issues of education humanization, and the emergence and separation of disciplines with a focus on universal values.

The proposed goal can be achieved by solving research problems related to the historical genesis of the emergence of the education humanization paradigms, understanding the interrelations of scientific and social values, analyzing the dichotomy between the natural sciences and the humanities, and satisfying the spiritual needs of the individual through educational opportunities.

The main methods of studying this problem were the method of research and analysis of scientific texts, the method of extrapolation and comparative methods, the comparative historical method, and the method of extrapolation. They contributed to a comprehensive analysis of the issues of humanizing and humanizing knowledge and its implementation in education.

Many contemporary scientific studies recognize the problem of understanding the relationship between science and social values as a prerequisite for the modern development of science and education. In this regard, we can single out the works of R. Mardonov, Z. Bell, G. Dunne, M. Kultaieva, A. Minosian, O. Varypaev (*Jurchenko et al., 2020; Kultaieva & Grygorova, 2023; Dunne, 2023*). The challenges and contradictions of a highly unstable world have led to different and even conflicting assessments of the role of science in society, ranging from scientific populism to anti-scientific sentiments. Supporters of this trend argue that science itself is an absolute value that can solve all social problems: economic, political, social, cultural, and so on (*Ball, 2003*). At the same time, there are social and humanitarian disciplines rejected as having no positive value. In this context, it is necessary to instill an understanding of the importance of the paradigm of humanism, which develops a holistic worldview, in the higher education system.

Creating a humanistic educational system

The most significant research materials on the humanization of education date back to the fifteenth century, when European universities began a movement to include disciplines that focused on human values in the educational process. However, the dominance of the natural sciences and further technological advances in modern times have overshadowed this humanizing trend. A cognitive, scientific approach has been favoured in educational practice (*Mardonov, 2021; Minosian et al., 2019*). The emphasis was shifted to the targeted application of scientific knowledge and methods in technology development. However, this turn came at the cost of developing scientific thinking at the spiritual and moral education expense and splitting

a single culture into separate humanitarian and technical spheres. The idea that personal development requires a holistic approach to education was central to the discussion among intellectuals. This, in turn, requires continuous improvement of the educational system and, in particular, educating the pedagogical staff in schools and technical universities, which continue to be the center of the global and Ukrainian educational system ([Mardonov, 2021, p. 290](#)).

Addressing the imperative to humanize education requires examining fundamental concepts. “Humanism” is broadly defined as the system of values that shapes human identity through actions that promote individual well-being and support the inalienable right to live with dignity. In a narrower sense, it refers to the cultural movement of the Renaissance in Europe, particularly in Italy and Germany. In the mainstream of this movement, humanism was originally a specific intellectual endeavor centered on philological studies, including rhetoric, grammar, poetry, ethics, and philosophy. Rooted in a deep respect for language, Renaissance humanists sought wisdom primarily in ancient texts and sought to elevate human character through acquiring ancient knowledge ([Ball, 2003, pp. 10-15](#)).

Later, the term “humanities” was extended to include a cluster of disciplines known as the humanities, which explore various aspects of human spirituality, such as philology, ethics, philosophy, history, aesthetics, law, etc. As a result, scholars in these fields began to be called humanitarians, to distinguish them from humanists, who support humanistic ideals regardless of their profession.

In the philosophical discourse, the sharp contrast between the humanities and the natural sciences was emphasized by the Baden school of neo-Kantians, especially G. Rickert. They argued that the natural sciences study objective phenomena to describe the general, typical, and universal laws of nature, while the humanities study the manifestations of the human spirit, with an emphasis on the subjectivity and uniqueness of human existence. G. Rickert also argued that research in the humanities favors values that are inherent in human life, such as significant historical events, the lives of influential figures, and classic works of literature.

This dichotomy between the humanities and the natural sciences is also supported by those advocating phenomenological hermeneutics. They observed that while the natural sciences are concerned with the explanation of natural phenomena, the humanities are concerned with understanding the intricacies of human life and its manifestations.

The historical context of the term defines “humanistic” as a reflection of a value system that uplifts people by providing policies and institutions that promote human well-being, happiness, justice, and empowerment. Thus, the term “humanities” refers to professions focusing on the understanding and interpretation of human behavior, spirituality, and cultural phenomena, which are collectively referred to as the humanities ([Mimosian et al., 2019, p. 335](#)).

Thus, in education, humanization implies creating an educational system that is in harmony with the values and ideals of the humanist tradition. At the same time, humanization implies enriching educational programs with humanitarian content. This requires the introduction of humanitarian disciplines into the curriculum.

The distinction between the “humanization of education” and the “humanization of training” reveals clear vectors for the reform of higher education. In the broadest sense, humanization aims to promote a humane educational environment in society that is consistent with humanistic ideals, including personal autonomy, social justice, and human dignity. In

contrast, humanization specifically refers to the content and methodology of university education (*Borinsteyn, 2014, pp. 30-31*).

It is significant to note that humanization is more than just the expansion of the humanities in the curriculum; it is the fundamental inculcation of humanistic values in young people and the formation of their personalities. The main challenge, which is particularly difficult to implement in practice, is to change the educational system so that it conforms to humanistic norms and ideals. This means that the state guarantees citizens the realization of their human rights and freedoms, which leads to a decent life in connection with their chosen profession.

Another mission is to immerse people in reaching humanitarian culture through educational frameworks and various forms of student engagement. Its goal is to counteract the one-dimensional nature of the individual imposed by professional specialization and to promote a more holistic development.

There are significant differences in the interpretation and solution of the problems of humanization and education humanization, both theoretically and practically. Humanism is a dynamic worldview that evolves. It is subject to different interpretations in different social groups and cultures, including differences between Western and Eastern perspectives. The debate about humanism in education continues unabated in the context of Ukraine, which is forming its identity according to Western models.

The practical challenges that arise in this discourse are often related to balancing individual and public interests, reconciling the rights of younger generations to education with the real capabilities of the state, guaranteeing graduates employment according to their degrees, and holding universities accountable for quality education while regulating internal relations among students, teachers, and administrators. Humanistic elements in the educational system include the promotion of a creative learning environment, the promotion of opportunities for the general cultural enrichment of students, the management of material aspects of student life, and the organization of leisure activities. Adopting humanist ideals means putting individual interests before institutional interests, and defending the student's position concerning the administrative structure. Despite their proclamation, however, these ideals are difficult to realize (*Minosian & Varypaev, 2023a*).

Those who pursue higher education in socially undervalued professions in such societies quickly become disillusioned because their qualifications cannot be translated into meaningful opportunities. This reality underscores the notion that humanism seems to be a luxury that is reserved for those states that are economically prosperous and governed by democratic principles. The ideal of a humanistic approach to higher education seems feasible in societies where the interests of the state and the individual are harmoniously balanced. However, bridging the gap between humanistic ideals and their practical realization remains a constant challenge in the real world of business.

The desire for human dignity, increased prosperity, and personal freedom is universally accepted, although understood from different perspectives. Humanism emphasizes the dignity of the individual, autonomy, and freedom of belief. Humanism, rooted in European soil, is increasingly converging with the values of liberal democracy.

The constant tension between individual aspirations and state interests, between the right to free choice of occupation and employment opportunities in the labor market, and between

access to education and the economic capacity of the state to support higher education, becomes apparent when the humanization concept is translated into practice. Thus, implementing the educational paradigm requires compromising between idealistic aspirations and pragmatic realities.

Concepts for studying and understanding personality

Recently, there has been a significant paradigm shift in approaches to higher education. Instead of striving to educate only qualified professionals, the emphasis is being shifted to meeting the spiritual needs of the individual through educational opportunities. This indicates a significant trend - the de-ideologization and humanization of higher education.

In this new context, humanities research is increasingly saturated with personal issues. The emphasis is shifting from activity-oriented concepts to the study and understanding of the individual. This means that educational goals are no longer limited to preparing students for specific jobs. Instead, they are designed to develop and meet the needs of the individual as a whole person (*Minosian & Varypaev, 2023b*).

This evolution reflects a long-standing debate among scientists and philosophers about human nature. Whether the whole person can be understood through his or her activities, or whether the personality aspect is independent and cannot be completely reduced to the sphere of activities. Thus, higher education's focus on personal development reflects the belief that each person has a unique inner world that is not completely replicated or understood by their outer actions (*Kultaieva, 2018*).

In the contemporary discourse on understanding human nature, various approaches and discussions are constantly being developed. First and foremost, it is significant to recognize that there is no single formula or approach that can provide an exhaustive explanation of the complexity of human nature. To say that an exclusively activity-based approach is inadequate is no longer to deny its importance in the context of an understanding of the person.

Activity theory, which emphasizes interaction with the environment through specific activities, makes it possible to consider a person as an active participant in his or her life. It reveals to us how the psyche, like the personality traits, interacts with the various forms of activity that shape it. Significantly, this approach allows us to consider the processes of “depersonalization” and “appropriation” when an individual interacts with the culture, norms, and values of the world around him/her.

In the humanities and education, activity theory has become an integral part of understanding and learning. It helps us to broaden our understanding of how students interact with the learning material and how they acquire knowledge. In particular, it provides an opportunity to analyze and optimize learning processes, considering the interaction with the social environment and context. In this way, activity-based approaches are not only relevant in modern pedagogy, but they are also a necessary tool for a successful educational practice. (*Minosian et al., 2020*).

The education of students is one of the most controversial and complex issues in higher education, central to discussions among both educators and psychologists.

The answer to the question of whether it is necessary and ethical to educate adults depends to a large extent on how we understand the essence of education. If we consider it as a process

of forming certain qualities in a person to meet certain standards or needs, then it is possible to refuse such education. However, if we understand education as creating conditions for self-developing the individual during university education, the answer is yes.

The task of a teacher in higher education is not limited to transmitting information. Although books and computers are also sources of knowledge, the teacher plays a unique role in shaping the cultural environment at the university. He conveys not only a specific set of knowledge and skills, but also a worldview, values, attitudes, and professional behaviors.

A specialist in the field not only teaches students but also influences their development as individuals and introduces them to a particular culture. Live communication with him is a key element of the learning process, which contributes not only to the transfer of knowledge but also to the formation of cultural heritage and the development of society (*Minosian & Yegorov, 2016*).

The principle that only one personality can influence the development and formation of other personalities is still valid today, and only a character can form a true character. Education, therefore, is not just the transfer of knowledge, but also the construction of a system of relationships between people.

Modern pedagogy, like psychology, increasingly tends to see education as creating conditions for individual self-development. It is the abandonment of the goal-oriented formation of personality according to a certain ideal in favor of creating an environment conducive to the personal development of each individual.

The principles of the humanistic approach reject any attempts to directly influence the individual, even if they are educational or therapeutic. Everyone has the right to make their own choices and should live their lives independently, without shifting responsibility for their actions to others.

The uniqueness and originality of each individual constitute the true wealth of society. Any restriction on their free development and expression is detrimental not only to the individual but also to society as a whole. Therefore, the educator cannot determine the path of personality development in advance but must accept it as it is. Only in this case, a fruitful interaction between the educator and the person being educated is possible, which is the key to a successful educational process.

The main goal of the tutor is to open up to the tutee a wide range of possibilities that are often unknown to the child, adolescent, or young person due to their limited life experience, lack of knowledge, and understanding of cultural values. The educator should not and cannot hide his or her attitude toward a particular choice when disclosing such options. However, you should avoid expressing this attitude in a way that is too explicit and directive. You should always leave the student the right to make independent decisions. Otherwise, the responsibility for any consequences of the decisions made will be removed from the student and transferred to the educator.

Another fundamental requirement for organizing education is a constant respect for the student's personality as a full and equal partner in any shared activity. The idea of equality, partnership, and mutual respect among participants is at the heart of what's known as collaborative pedagogy. Its principles are central to university education. As many scientists and educators confirm, the greatest effect in teaching and education is achieved in situations where

the teacher and student jointly solve a problem to which neither of them knows the answer. In this context, the principles of partnership and cooperation reach their maximum expression.

Humanizing and forming specialist competencies

Humanization is first and foremost the immersion of young people in the cultural heritage of humanity. It is often seen as a significant complement to vocational education. The main goal of humanization in education is twofold: first, it aims to counteract the narrowness or one-dimensionality of vocational training, thus broadening the perspectives of a young professional. Second, it is an attempt to instill in them the basic principles of a humanistic worldview. In essence, humanization serves as a way to imbue young people with civilized society's spiritual values and contribute to their cultural development, going far beyond mere professionalization.

Tensions arise when trying to find a balance between humanization and professionalization in the educational framework, despite the unanimous recognition of the importance of humanization. The problem is to coordinate these elements in the learning process.

The importance of professionalization cannot be overemphasized, as it is fundamental to forming specialist competencies and defining the university education purpose. Humanization, however, is necessary for educating a fully developed personality. Professionalization provides people with the necessary skills to be able to function effectively in the social activities of society. However, individuals must assimilate into cultural spheres, accepting their values and content, in addition to functional adaptation. This process of assimilation not only shapes an individual's spirituality and worldview but also defines their place and role in society. Without this spiritual enrichment, people are in danger of becoming mere functionaries of the social system, devoid of deeper meaning or individuality (*Minosian et al., 2020, p. 272*).

Personality emerges as a result of the fusion of individuality and cultural influences. It is both a product of and a contribution to culture. Outside culture, people can be marginalized or relegated to technical roles without deeper meaning. A profession becomes deeply meaningful to people when it is consistent with their aspirations for individuality in a rich cultural diversity and contributes to realizing their unique humanity. Forming a truly human personality goes beyond the scope of mass consciousness and its often-limiting stereotypes. Only a "mass man" without inner spiritual depth can be educated by mass consciousness. The essence of an individual's humanity lies in his or her innate spirituality and cultivated view of the world, nurtured through participation in culture. The humanism essence is the promotion of the unrestricted expression of the individual in culture, to facilitate his autonomous self-determination. In this way, humanization is inseparably linked with humanism, which opens up the profound depths of culture to the younger generation and allows them to immerse themselves in the vast expanse of the world's cultural heritage.

When discussing the balance between humanitarian and professional components within the curriculum, we are faced with competing interests of both humanitarians and professionals. Professionals often argue for minimizing the humanities block due to the cumulative growth of scientific information. Humanists, on the other hand, emphasize the richness of humanistic culture and advocate the inclusion of new courses and specializations. However, the only way to solve the problem constructively is to find a reasonable compromise.

So far, the distribution of the total number of teaching hours for the humanities block has been extremely uneven, and the key question is the effectiveness of using these resources in humanities education.

Implementing humanities education in practice is a matter of two significant questions. First, what the humanities block's disciplinary matrix should be? And how should the humanities be taught to maximize their impact? Addressing these issues is key to humanities education's effectiveness.

Forming the humanitarian matrix requires a pragmatic compromise in which different points of view are heard and considered in developing the curriculum. We believe that human-centered disciplines that embrace the cultural worlds, humanistic ideals, and concepts shaping social, political, and legal systems over the world should be at the core of the humanities disciplinary matrix (*Varypaev et al., 2021, p. 29*).

However, it is worth paying attention to the trend that the humanitarian block is increasingly filled with disciplines that promote professionalization rather than contribute to the individual's holistic development. For example, the need for foreign language learning is undeniable in both professional and humanitarian education. Foreign language skills are critical for highly skilled professionals and for the humanities. However, the growing volume of language learning at universities is often lumped into the humanities due to nomenclature. However, the humanization essence is to educate the students' personal qualities through studying general cultural disciplines. It does not only focus on acquiring professional skills (*Minosian & Varypaev, 2022, p. 59*).

Although history has traditionally been an integral part of humanities education, university history curricula have changed in the last years. It is necessary to emphasize that studying the national history and statehood of Ukraine is obligatory during the armed aggression of Russia. History courses within the humanities block should offer perspectives beyond the school curriculum. They should focus on the humanistic perspective of historical development. For example, university history courses can study topics such as the evolution of democracies, movements for fundamental rights, cultural interactions, modern national history, etc. (*Minosian & Varypaev, 2023a, pp. 40-42*).

Our proposed humanities matrix emphasizes core courses, including philosophy, foreign languages, Western and Ukrainian history, and political science focusing on human rights and freedoms. In addition to the content of humanities education, the methodology of teaching these disciplines is equally significant. It is significant to recognize that there is no one "right" approach to teaching the humanities and that absolute truth is difficult to achieve. Instead, teachers should strive to teach students the diversity and richness of humanitarian concepts, fostering awareness of human cultural diversity and nuanced perspectives in humanitarian discourse.

Discussion

The principles of forming a new paradigm of humanities education based on the three basic principles of pluralism, representativeness, and distance are discussed in the contemporary research space of humanization and humanization of education (*Dunn, 2023*). The researchers pay attention to identifying and analyzing these principles, which will have broad prospects for further research.

Pluralism recognizes the diversity and complexity of global humanitarian and sociopolitical thought. It embraces a variety of viewpoints without dogmatism or claims to absolute truth.

Representativeness means including in the educational process those foundational works and ideas that have been widely recognized and have achieved classic status in the relevant humanities. This principle emphasizes the importance of respectful communication with classical authors and primary sources and refrains from imposing the teacher's personal concepts. Instead, it encourages the study of concepts established in the global discourse. Effective communication of these concepts requires skilled interpretive skills to guide students through the confusing territory of humanitarian culture.

The principle of detachment emphasizes the importance of the teacher's presentation of the concepts being studied in an objective, impartial manner and without political, national, or class bias.

These principles and their recognition are significant in building a holistic and harmonious educational system. From the authors' viewpoint, teachers should be mediators between world public opinion and the younger generation, in recognition of their significant cultural and educational role and their moral responsibility.

Conclusion

Fundamental reforms of the education system, including higher education, are required by the ongoing transformation processes in Ukraine. Ukraine's integration into the European educational environment leads to organizational and managerial changes in higher education. However, this alone cannot satisfy the need for an educational environment conducive to forming well-rounded individuals, not just specialists in the economic mechanism. Faced with global challenges, new social stratifications, and economic mechanisms, the main strategy should be to promote a humanistic approach among all professionals. This worldview produces a system of universal values and develops a vision of global prospects meeting the requirements of modern higher education. The historical context of the humanization concept and education humanization affirms the significance of a human-centered system of values aimed at achieving the well-being, happiness, justice, and empowerment of the individual. This idea reflects the need to support institutions and activities aimed at achieving these goals, like a belief in the potential and significance of human beings.

The authors emphasize that the main task of humanization and humanization of education is to immerse people in the richness of humanitarian culture through curricula and various forms of student engagement. In this way, a more holistic development of the individual is promoted, counteracting the one-dimensionality of the personality imposed by professional and technical specialization.

Thus, humanism is a dynamic worldview that is constantly evolving and interpreted in different social and cultural contexts. Ukraine should support and develop the traditions of humanism in education based on Western values in forming identity and uniqueness of personal development, following the pan-European path of democratization of education.



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