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TEACHER'S ROLE IN IMPLEMENTING INTEGRATED CURRICULUM

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ABSTRACT

This article explores the role of teachers in implementing an integrated curriculum, particularly in the context of foreign language education. It defines the integrated curriculum approaches, the interdisciplinary connections through various subject areas. We emphasize the characteristics of the integrated curriculum. We dwell on how interdisciplinary curriculum benefits the students based on the holistic nature of the social life surrounding the students. This happens through allowing curriculum mirror social life. The teacher as the key figure of the learning and teaching process. It emphasizes that the teacher's role is central to the success of this approach, as they must plan, execute, assess lessons and blend subjects into cohesive learning experiences. This also stresses the importance of the teacher being flexible, collaborating with interested parties and overall the essence of the teacher's role. Practical examples are provided, such as using project-based learning and collaborative group work to integrate subjects like English, economics, and history. Through this we are able to cultivate lifelong learning and the development of well-rounded, informed individuals.

Key words: Integrated curriculum, interdisciplinary teaching, foreign language education, teacher's role, holistic learning.

Introduction: In the fast-paced changing world the educational process is once again facing the ever-present need to prepare the students for the upcoming shift in the society and arm them with the means to deal with them. Education is perhaps the one and up to this point the only consistent way to preparing not just a selected group of people but basically the entire society. Thus, with time we are not just growing to include as many people as possible but also making the content of education more real life suited. This continuously has been the main problem of education: to show the connection of taught content to real life where everything is to be implemented. This very statement in our opinion is proving the relevance of our research topic. As everything in daily life is interconnected and usually takes not just making connections between different concepts critically and creatively, it also relies on cooperation between different groups of people we firmly believe that

integrated curriculum can be considered as an option to organize teaching and learning practices. The teaching process is the responsibility and the main act of the teacher who guides and supervises the entire process. To put it another way the teachers' role in this cannot be overlooked while implementing the integrated curriculum. ***The goal of the article*** is to examine teacher's role in implementing integrated curriculum more specifically in foreign language teaching.

The objectives of the article are:

- to identify the characteristics of integrated curriculum,
- to point out teacher's role in modern education,
- to observe the necessary steps of implementing the integrated curriculum.

The theoretical significance of the article lies in its exploration of integrated curricula, highlighting the role of teachers in modern education and offering a practical framework for holistic learning.

The current ***scientific development level*** of integrated curriculum in Armenian educational background is relatively new as the first attempts are recognized in newly defined in "New Standards" for foreign language learning. They set a goal of language learning and incorporate interdisciplinary connections across subjects. However, it has a long standing history starting from John Dewey, later on being promoted by his student William Kilpatrick, J.W. Wrightstone, Ralph Tyler and others. With a number of differences, they all make the point of interdisciplinary, subject-real social life connections and their importance on progressive education.

The ***methodological foundations*** for the article are as follows:

- ***Literature Review:*** The research utilizes historical and contemporary literature on integrated curriculum, focusing on theorists like John Dewey, Jerome Bruner, and Lawrence Stenhouse to understand its evolution. We also incorporate a system approach to examine integrated lessons and teacher's role in it holistically. We need to look at the curriculum, teacher roles, student engagement, external factors holistically to figure the outcomes that we expect at the end of the educational process.

- ***Theoretical Framework:*** It categorizes integrated curriculum into multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary, and transdisciplinary approaches, aiding in comprehending varying levels of integration. The article dwells on the very concept of integration, the teacher's role in it and the peculiarities of integration in foreign language teaching classroom showcasing its descriptive analysis, practical recommendations and critical reflection. It synthesizes educational perspectives on the teacher's role, highlighting the importance of collaboration among teachers, students, and parents.

Main part: While integrated curriculum is relatively new to the teaching practice, it is not new to education. The traditional approach to education sets certain boundaries where every subject is approached separately. Yet continuously a number of educational professionals voiced the need to review this as the separation of

the subjects contradicts the representation of the interconnection of different aspects of the everyday social life. One of the first proponents for integrated curriculum was John Dewey, in his book "*Experience and Education*" in 1938. In this, he referred to subjects in schools as disconnected "water-tight" compartments. In the 1960s, others followed: such as Bruner in the USA (Man as a Course of Study, MACOS project) and Stenhouse in the UK (Humanities Curriculum Project, HCP) who also believed that knowledge should not be soloed. Many nomenclatures are often used for integrated curriculum approaches and are often classified into three broad categories – multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary, and transdisciplinary which vary in levels of integration [1].

However, the vital need of understanding the integrated curriculum remains. As a whole, an integrated curriculum allows children to pursue learning in a holistic way, without the restrictions often imposed by subject boundaries. In early childhood programs it focuses upon the inter-relatedness of all curricular areas in helping children acquire basic learning tools. It recognizes that the curriculum for the primary grades includes reading, writing, listening, speaking, literature, drama, social studies, math, science, health, physical education, music, and visual arts. The integrated curriculum also incorporates investigative processes and technology. It emphasizes the importance of maintaining partnerships with families; having knowledge of children and how they learn; and building upon the community and cultural context. Integration acknowledges and builds on the relationships which exist among all things. An integrated curriculum implies learning that is synthesized across traditional subject areas and learning experiences that are designed to be mutually reinforcing. This approach develops the child's ability to transfer their learning to other settings [2].

Three ways to integrate the curriculum can be through:

- themes
- projects
- individual and small group studies [3].

At the same time, the National Herbart Society in 1895 considered integration as a possible solution to three problems:

- What is worth knowing, given the huge increase in available knowledge?
- What is important to be able to do, given a huge increase in the number of students needing education to be productive in the workplace?
- How can schools teach moral character if teachers cannot relate curriculum to the real world? [4]

It can be inferred that perhaps the most important feature of integration is the nature of its relationship with subjects and disciplines. It is sometimes assumed that integration is an either/or matter, an alternative to or substitute for subject teaching. This implies that the two stand in a polarized relationship and are to be thought of as opposites. Such a view is quite mistaken for at least two reasons. In the first place

integration and differentiation are not opposites but correlatives, that is the meaning of the one is partly dependent upon its association with the other. The notions, therefore, are complementary and not contradictory. And secondly, both analysis and synthesis are integral to the processes of learning and thinking. The one cannot really be employed without the other. The confusion arising from the relationship between integrated teaching and subject teaching is causing further complication. While integration and differentiation are correlative, integration and subjects are not. Integration is a process; subjects are a product. Integrated teaching and subject teaching are not different but represent two stages of the same process. Subject teaching is a form of integrated teaching. To teach a subject is to teach an integrated cognitive structure [5].

An integrated, collaborative approach to teaching is new for some students, parents, and teachers, but it offers a rich learning experience when properly implemented. However, it is noteworthy that to ensure the successful implementation of integrated curriculum the cooperation of students, parents and teachers is essential as they all three together make up the entire learning process of a student. Teachers can start by working together and engaging children in hands-on learning through methods like activity-based mathematics, cooperative learning, workshops, and multi-age groupings. Teachers also need to communicate with parents by holding meetings, sharing resources, and providing insights into what's happening in the classroom [6].

However, integrated curriculum is a broad and tricky concept. As a teaching approach that promotes student-centered ideology, democracy in the classroom, collaboration, inquiry-based learning, it brings us to the issue of classroom management. We believe that one key way to do that is through detailed planning. Considering the free environment that integrated curriculum is supposed to create, planning will not always be the "guiding map" for the teaching and learning process, but it sets the foundation. The key to success lies in careful planning as it prepares what lies ahead for the teacher and the students as well. During planning, the teacher makes the decisions about goals, activities, resources, timing, grouping and other aspects of lesson. The following elements can be included in the lesson plan:

- descriptions of the class,
- recent work,
- objective,
- contents (context, activity and class organization, aids, language, possible problems),
- additional possibilities [7].

The teacher should develop a long-term plan that balances state standards, the goals of the program, and the children's as well as their own interests. Regularly assessing students' progress is essential, and a good starting point might be a brainstorming session where the class discusses topics they find exciting. This process

not only engages students but also helps the teacher create a learning environment that is meaningful for everyone [8].

Integrated curriculum can allow the teacher at different periods of teaching weave different themes into broader themes and real-world applications. By showing enthusiasm for learning and participating in the process, teachers inspire their students to do the same.

The teacher's role is not just to teach but to create a supportive and dynamic space where both teacher and students can explore, learn, and grow together.

This brings us to notice that the curriculum used in the classroom cannot overlook teachers' role. Teachers are not only the one's to set goals for the teaching process, they are also the one's responsible for forming a complete curriculum, implementing it, executing it and then assessing its efficiency to start the circle all over again appropriating it to the topic.

The end-goal of education from the perspective of a teacher is to insure providing the students with the necessary knowledge, skills, competences that would be essential to the student for the self-realization in real-life circumstances. We view integrated lessons as a form of accountability from teacher to organize the learning of the student.

The key factor for student success is a coherent curriculum. A coherent curriculum means that for teachers and students, the learning goals, activities, and assessments align with each other. Alignment prepares students for both standardized tests and performance demonstrations.

For many teachers, the strength of interdisciplinary curriculum is that teachers can set it in a context that is relevant to students and fits their needs.

Through the integrated lessons the teachers:

- ensure relevancy
- ensure rigor
- ensure that no student is left behind
- prepare the students to the next level of education.

In an overstuffed curriculum, teachers are looking for ways to make curriculum meaningful as knowledge must have a context if it is meaningful. Without meaning, students turn off. Integrating the curriculum in a real-life context makes it easier to see how school knowledge may be useful. Students learn by making connections; the more connections they can make, the more they learn. One of the greatest rewards of interdisciplinary work comes when teachers do it collaboratively. Collaboration leads to an energized teaching force [9].

A teacher's work is thinking practice: involving essentially demanding, knowledge-intensive work requiring academic expertise and social skills. Teaching requires systematic and persistent planning from curriculum design to detailed lesson implementation in close encounters with students. The task is to support student learning both in the individual and social classroom contexts. Teachers' aim is to

educate independent, responsible and knowledgeable citizens by using pedagogical methods relevant for their students. Teaching involves continuous problem-solving and decision-making in multiple and continuously changing interactional situations.

Teaching is extremely responsible and independent, even autonomous in many contexts, and it requires ethical professional action and integrity both in school communities and their surrounding societies. Working in the middle of continuous rapid changes, incompleteness, uncertainties and imperfections are always part of teaching, but nowadays these teaching characteristics are changing. The traditional ways of working as teachers are being challenged, and teachers face new professional demands, such as creating new ways to effectively teach, learn, and assess in formal and informal educational contexts, implementing new curricula, and promoting learning focused participatory pedagogies and digitalization.

This brings us to the concepts of teacher's flexibility. The autonomous role of modern teachers allows them to "art-craft" their lessons to serve the objectives and goals of the lesson as much as possible. This can be achieved through the flexibility. Currently teachers have a variety of techniques, methods and approaches at their disposal to meet the learning goal. This flexible approach, often seen in highly skilled teachers, is like "weaving" together different strategies to help students learn effectively. [10] For example, teachers can use project-based learning or collaborative groups on different topics. The teacher is not limited. He/she can use blended learning to get benefits both from traditional methodology, interactive methods or digital technologies. Teachers can use flipped classrooms some part of theory learning to home and activities assigned to the students can be cross-cultural.

Project-Based Learning Example (Theme: Local Business)

- **Subjects Integrated:** English, Economics, and Art

- **Practical Example:** Students design their own small business model. In English, they create marketing materials (brochures, websites). Through social studies, they can develop a business plan implementing math to make calculation. They can integrate art to make logos and advertisements. The final project could involve a presentation to the class, where they "pitch" their business idea.

- **Teacher's Role:** The teacher organizes collaboration across the subjects, supporting students as they blend creativity, writing, and financial understanding.

Collaborative Group Work Example (Theme: Global Issues)

- **Subjects Integrated:** English, History.

- **Practical Example:** In small groups, students choose any historical period and an issue present at that time that interests them (from their history classes). In English, they write and present a speech on the issue such as why it arose, what

were the conditions, what could have been done. In History, they research significant movements or events related to the issue. They may discuss the moral implications of issue.

• **Teacher's Role:** The teacher facilitates group collaboration, encouraging students to apply historical knowledge to modern ethical dilemmas while enhancing public speaking and presentation skills in English.

According to the new standards of RA The purpose of teaching foreign languages is to educate a person who knows different languages, who is able to communicate and act in the modern multilingual and multicultural world independently. The purpose relates not only to the student but also to the responsible, governing educational institution and teachers. The teacher's role in language teaching is defined by it. In the practical sense the teacher needs to take some practical steps to deliver a lesson. We can set that the teacher's basic actions in the classroom include understanding the capability of each learner, planning lessons (choosing topics, materials, appropriate activities, approaches, techniques), executing the lesson, evaluating, giving feedback.

9th grade English copybook by G. Gasparyan, N. Hovhannisyanyan, H. Kachberuny has a topic "Future Career". Here are some possible integration suggestions.

1. Foreign Language

Students write short essays or reports on career they are interested in, using simple vocabulary and grammar to describe job roles, required skills, and personal motivations. They learn career related vocabulary. In case of possibility they conduct interviews with teachers, family members or others asking them about their jobs.

2. Social Studies

Students explore how different careers are connected to the society, different cultures and what is their role

3. Mathematics

Students take different jobs and their possible salaries. They use basic math to count and compare the salaries of different careers. Students can create graphs or charts. Students create simple budgets count taxes, consider lifestyle choices.

4. Science

Students explore career in science, technology, engineering, environmental science and mathematics. They discuss various careers, the skills needed and the impact of technology on these fields.

5. Art and Design

Students create visual portfolios that show different careers, including drawings, images, sculptures or even needlework that represent the skills and tools used in those professions. Singing and dancing are also options. They can consider

graphic designing as well. They can create projects and discuss how their hobbies can be turned into a career.

6. Physical Education

Students identify careers related to health and fitness, such as sports medicine, coaching, or nutrition. Discuss the importance of physical health in various professions. Team workouts can be organized.

7. Information Technology

Students use online resources to find out about various careers. Students can create simple presentations or posters. They speak how important technologies are for different careers and what is their role in market.

While conducting this research teacher takes more of a “passive role” of a guide facilitating the process.

As stated above, we consider integrated lessons a way to achieve not only a more communicative foreign language teaching, but also more than knowledge based education. This claim is based on several demands. For example, New standards of foreign language teaching of RA (2020) state that the goal of foreign language teaching is to develop an individual who is capable of communicating and realizing in the modern multilingual and multicultural world [11]. One proposition that is also provided is from OECD Learning Framework 2030. It offers a vision of helping every student develop as a whole person, fulfil his or her potential and help shape a shared future built on the well-being of individuals, communities and the planet [12]. While CEFR in an action oriented-approach represents the student as a “social agent” acting in a social world. CEFR aims to use foreign language teaching to facilitate. quality in language education and promoting a Europe of open-minded plurilingual citizens [13].

To provide insight to the article, we need to recognize the importance of teacher’s central work in implementing integrated lessons to the curriculum. As separate elements we have students, teachers, the curriculum and integrates lessons. While the article presents them separately it is essential to realize that they realize themselves holistically as one to function. Teachers take the central role in making and implementing the curriculum for the students learning practice through the integrated lessons. Thus, we can better understand the interplay between the teacher’s efforts, student outcomes, and curriculum design in achieving educational objectives.

Conclusion: The implementation of an integrated curriculum in modern education, especially within the context of foreign language teaching, offers a dynamic and holistic approach to student learning. By breaking away from traditional subject boundaries, this method encourages connections between disciplines, fostering critical thinking, creativity, and real-world problem-solving skills. The teacher’s role is pivotal in this process, as they must not only design, plan, and facilitate interdisciplinary lessons but also act as guides and mentors in an increasingly complex and

interconnected educational landscape. Despite its potential, successful implementation requires careful planning, collaboration among educators, students, and parents, and overcoming practical challenges such as resource availability and institutional resistance. As Armenia's educational system continues to adopt and integrate these approaches, the development of teacher training and support systems will be essential in ensuring that both teachers and students benefit fully from this progressive educational model. Ultimately, integrated curricula prepare students for real-life applications, equipping them with the skills necessary to thrive in a rapidly changing world.

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РОЛЬ УЧИТЕЛЯ В РЕАЛИЗАЦИИ ИНТЕГРИРОВАННОГО УЧЕБНОГО ПЛАНА

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АННОТАЦИЯ

В данной статье рассматривается роль учителей в реализации интегрированного учебного плана, особенно в контексте обучения иностранным языкам. Определяются подходы к интегрированному учебному плану, а также междисциплинарные связи между различными предметными областями. Мы подчеркиваем характеристики интегрированного учебного плана и обсуждаем, как междисциплинарный учебный план приносит пользу учащимся, основываясь на целостной природе социальной жизни, окружающей студентов. Это достигается за счет того, что учебный план отражает социальную жизнь. Учитель является ключевым фактором процесса обучения. Подчеркивается, что роль учителя является центральной для успеха данного подхода, поскольку он должен планировать, осуществлять и оценивать уроки, а также объединять предметы в целостные образовательные опыты. Это также акцентирует важность гибкости учителя, сотрудничества с заинтересованными сторонами и общей сущности роли учителя. Приводятся практические примеры, такие как использование обучения на основе проектов и совместной групповой работы для интеграции таких предметов, как английский язык, экономика и история. Это позволяет нам развивать навыки непрерывного обучения и формирование всесторонне развитых, информированных личностей.

Ключевые слова: интегрированный учебный план, междисциплинарное обучение, обучение иностранным языкам, роль учителя, целостное обучение.