

Pedagogical Aspects of Designing the Content of Integrated Lessons in Education

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Abstract: This article analyzes integrated lessons, the purpose of integrated lessons and the design of their content, current issues of methodological lesson planning, as well as the scientific approaches of many research scholars in this field.

Keywords: Integration, game technologies, problem-based teaching methods, innovative approaches, design.

Introduction: Integration means unification, combination, and synthesis. In educational institutions, this concept is often interpreted as follows: within one lesson, two or more subjects are harmonized and taught by two or more teachers. Such lessons are referred to by various names: a binary lecture (that is, a lecture conducted by two teachers), an interdisciplinary lesson, or an integrated lesson.

A binary lecture is a type of lecture delivered jointly in a conversational form by two teachers (or by a scholar and a practitioner, or by representatives of two different scientific schools) [1].

T.G. Brazhe approaches integrated lessons in a very interesting way. According to her, school subjects have historically possessed an integrated (that is, interconnected) character. For example, literature lessons at school and literary studies, students' reading practice and essay-writing experience — all of these are interconnected [2]. A.Ya. Danilyuk explains integration more profoundly. He explains intra-disciplinary connections through "semiotic pairs":

- thinking and written speech;
- movement and thinking;
- practice and theory;
- through such pairs as image and narration,

subjects become harmonized with one another [3].

Some authors consider integrated lessons as a means of motivating students. For example, in higher education institutions, binary lectures are conducted in order to demonstrate different scientific approaches to one issue. Practical binary lessons include:

- game technologies;
- problem-based teaching methods;
- innovative approaches (for example, case study — teaching based on real-life situations) [1].

Thus, an integrated lesson is a lesson that combines two (or more) academic subjects within one group (or class), based on the same curriculum, but across different disciplines, and is pre-planned and prepared in advance. Such integrated lessons are most frequently conducted in preschool educational institutions, and less frequently in general secondary schools.

The reasons for this may include:

- increasing complexity of educational material in integrated lessons;
- an increase in the volume of educational material studied as a result of combining two or more subjects;
- the necessity of spending considerable time and effort to plan, prepare, and conduct such non-

traditional lessons;

- limited lesson hours allocated for each subject;
- teachers' workload.

Integration is considered a relatively new direction in the educational process and is becoming an approach required in modern schools. In this regard, an active search for innovative pedagogical technologies is being carried out. Through integration, it becomes possible to go beyond the boundaries of a single academic subject, to demonstrate the interconnection of everything in movement and visually, and at the same time to strengthen motivation for studying one's subject. The preparation and conduct of an integrated lesson have specific characteristics. This process consists of several stages.

The first stage – preparatory stage. It includes the following elements:

- planning of the integrated lesson;
- designing the content of the integrated lesson;
- rehearsals (practice sessions).

Planning of the integrated lesson. During calendar-thematic planning, it is necessary to determine the number of integrated lessons, their topics, and the timing of their implementation. This helps to eliminate the element of randomness in conducting integrated lessons, to clearly define their role and place within the lesson system, and to ensure consistent preparation for the integrated lesson. At this stage, it is necessary to determine the optimal number of integrated lessons. The criteria for determining the optimal number are their necessity and sufficiency for achieving educational objectives.

The purpose of an integrated lesson is to achieve a holistic understanding of the phenomenon, event, or process being studied (as reflected in the topic, curriculum section, and so on). If the objective is to form holistic propaedeutic (introductory-general) knowledge at the beginning of studying a topic or curriculum section, then the integrated lesson is conducted as an introductory lesson for that topic or section. If the lesson is conducted at the end of a curriculum section, then it is carried out as a summarizing lesson. It is also possible to combine both approaches, that is, first to provide an introductory-general lesson, and at the end of studying the topic or section — to conduct a lesson

summarizing the knowledge acquired. The latter option is the most optimal, as it most fully corresponds to the logic of the cognitive process: from the general to the particular, from the particular to the general.

Analysis of pedagogical experience shows that at present integrated lessons are mainly used as summarizing lessons. This is due to the fact that educational material is usually studied inductively, that is, step by step, from the particular to the general. In such cases, a holistic understanding of the studied material is formed at the end of studying the material, in the summarizing lesson. During the process of mastering curriculum material, smaller components of educational material are combined. In this approach, although interdisciplinary connections may not be clearly visible, it is possible to form a holistic system of knowledge. Since a curriculum section represents a picture extended over time and filled with numerous facts, it is not easy to form its holistic image in the mind of each student. If, based on a deductive approach, an integrated lesson is applied as an introductory lesson, that is, if the lesson material is enlarged to the level of a general overview of the curriculum section, this helps to generalize information distributed across different subjects, to form in learners a holistic and comprehensive picture of the studied object, and to create the necessary foundational base for deeper study in subsequent lessons. In such an approach, the main didactic unit is not the lesson, but the curriculum section. On this basis, a logical solution to the problem of determining the optimal number of integrated lessons arises. The number of sections in the curriculum determines the number and topics of integrated lessons during the academic year. In this way, a system of integrated lessons connected with the core content of the subject is formed. This approach corresponds to the principle of moving from the general (primary synthesis) to the particular (analysis), and from the particular to the general (synthesis).

The introductory lesson creates a holistic picture of the studied material in students' minds. In subsequent lessons, the material is examined in detail and analyzed. In the final lesson of the section, generalizations and conclusions are made.

During calendar-thematic planning, it is also necessary to determine the optimal number of subjects to be integrated. An excessive number of integrated subjects

may lead to the following problems:

- overload of lesson material, excessive details, and lack of integrity of the material;
- excessive fatigue of students due to information overload, resulting in loss of attention during the lesson;
- misunderstandings between teachers and lack of coordination of actions during the lesson [4].

At the planning stage, it is necessary to agree upon and coordinate lesson topics with collaborating teachers. The most optimal option is joint planning of future lessons. At first glance, it may seem that there is no difficulty in planning integrated lessons. However, analysis shows that existing curricula have weak interdisciplinary connections, which do not facilitate knowledge integration.

Designing the content of an integrated lesson. At the first stage of working on the lesson, without specifying the material in detail, the lesson is modeled in general outlines. The composition of the lesson should be developed and its main parts identified. For this purpose, members of the creative group use the “brainstorming” method to propose different lesson variants, methods, and forms of work. From among all proposed ideas and variants, the optimal solution corresponding to the defined objective is selected.

The next stage of working on the lesson content is an independent creative process. Each teacher independently selects material within his or her field. The task is to find the most comprehensive material possible on the lesson topic, identify interesting facts, and select necessary illustrations, musical works, and other materials. After that, the group begins to develop the lesson plan outline. At this stage, all collected material is reviewed and discussed. From the mass of information, the creative group selects only what is most necessary, rejecting secondary and less significant information. This is connected with the necessity of adhering to time limits. The main task of this stage is to create a holistic structure of the lesson, constructing it as a unified whole without clear boundaries between integrated parts.

The rehearsal process. During rehearsals, the direction of the lesson is developed and the scenario is refined. At this stage, the “roles” of participants in the educational process are defined: who is responsible for

technical equipment, who reads poetry, and so on. It is also necessary to think through the spatial arrangement in advance: who stands where, how movements are organized (for example, so as not to block projected slides or another teacher), who performs which actions, and so on.

Such detailed development of the lesson is connected with the specific features of working in a teaching ensemble. A teacher working individually with a class is in a more favorable position, since he or she alone manages the lesson process. During the lesson, such a teacher may introduce improvisations at a convenient moment. Any uncoordinated action or unplanned improvisation may place participants in a difficult situation. Therefore, transitions from one monologue to another must be thoroughly developed so that possible improvisations do not confuse partners. For example, strict adherence to the final sentence of a monologue allows a partner to know exactly when to begin speaking. This method enables teachers to improvise freely.

Experience shows that improvised speech is perceived better than memorized text. However, well-memorized text is always preferable to poor improvisation. Everything depends on the teacher’s professionalism and acting skills. Lack of harmony in the work of the creative group may lead to a decline in lesson quality.

During the lesson, it is necessary to avoid excessive haste, awkwardness, and unconsidered actions, since even such “minor” circumstances can significantly spoil the overall impression of the lesson. Practice shows that during rehearsals it is necessary to conduct time calculations (timekeeping), which helps determine the precise course of the lesson and ensures adherence to the established time limits.

All of the above applies to teachers who do not have extensive experience in conducting integrated lessons. If sufficient experience is available, rehearsals may be omitted; it is enough to develop the general scheme of the lesson. For the lesson to proceed in a lively and natural manner, it is advisable not to involve students in rehearsals. If the lesson composition предусматривает short performances involving students, they should be prepared separately.

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