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## **Citizenship Education in Integrated Curriculum**

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### **Abstract**

*The accumulation of information in a society causes changes in the content and structure of its school curriculum. Citizenship education is a significant constituent part of the education curriculum, and integrated curricula are increasingly common. There are different kinds of such integrated curricula, but citizenship education is allotted an important place in all of them. This article analyses the viewpoints of teachers in Latvia about the kinds of curricula, the place of citizenship education in the curricula, and the place of citizenship as an interdisciplinary topic. The teachers in the study more frequently use interdisciplinary topics. There is a discrepancy between the planning of the topics on citizenship education and their use in the study process.*

### **Summary**

The accumulation of information in a society also causes changes in the content and structure of its school curriculum. Citizenship education is a significant constituent part of the education curriculum. More and more integrated curricula are now used. There are different kinds of integrated curricula, but in all of them citizenship education is allotted an important place. This article analyses the viewpoints of teachers in Latvia about the kinds of curricula, the place of citizenship education in the curricula, and a comparison of the place citizenship education occupies in the curriculum as an interdisciplinary topic. The teachers in the study more frequently use interdisciplinary topics. There is a discrepancy between the planning of the topics on citizenship education and their use in the study process.

### **Introduction**

An essential feature of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is the rapid globalisation processes of society. These exercise a vital impact on building education curricula and their implementation. School leavers must perceive the world in unity in its entirety, and must be able to analyse not only separate phenomena and processes, but also their interrelation and entirety. Issues pertaining to curriculum integration are becoming more and more important.

The kinds of integrated curriculum on citizenship education are closely connected with the relevant culture and traditions of the country concerned. They should be considered within the social context and connected with the needs of the society and the shift of the priorities. The pedagogist L. Le Metais (1997) has analysed the aims of education curricula in different countries. It is seen that in some countries some education aims are associated with citizenship education, both directly and indirectly:

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- In England the aim is to favour cultural development in school and society,
- In Korea it is to preserve and develop natural culture,
- In Australia the aim is to further understanding and interest in a balanced developed global environment,
- In Austria it is to learn to feel responsibility for the environment,
- In Spain the aim is to favour progressive independence of the surrounding environment,
- In Sweden the aim is to encourage young people to retain their attitude in the complex reality, in the great stream of information and rapid changes.

In Latvia the aim of education is defined in Latvia's education conception (1995): it is to afford an opportunity for everyone to become an intellectually and physically free and responsible, creative, cultural personality. For one to be really free, responsible and creative, one must understand the mechanism of the operation of the society, the regularities of the development of relations. In other words, it means that one needs citizenship education.

Citizenship education is one of the most essential parts of the education curriculum and serves as an expedient means in curriculum integration. As pointed out in UNESCO (1986), for example, in North American schools an attempt has been made to integrate several subjects in the social subject, in Arabian countries biology, chemistry and physics are taught as an integrated subject, but in French speaking countries these subjects are taught apart. The Canadian pedagogist David Pratt (1994) acknowledged that the most significant kind of curricula integration is when learners integrate acquired knowledge of daily activities in their world outlook. Issues of citizenship education are closely connected with the activities of each learner, both in today's reality and in their future intentions.

### **Curriculum Concept**

The concept of curriculum is not new. Its history is rather long. The word 'curriculum' has originated from the Latin word 'currere', which means 'to run'. The American M. K. Smith (2000) in the education encyclopaedia 'Infed' explains the development of the concept curriculum in the following way:

- Curriculum - chariot tracks (in ancient Greece);
- Curricula mentis - a way of developing one's intellect (Cicero);
- Curriculum - a program for teaching and education (A. Tom);
- Curriculum - the learning which is planned and guided by the school, it is carried on in groups or individually, inside or outside the school (J. Kerr, V. Kelly);
- Curriculum - projection of an educational activity (D. Pratt);
- Curriculum - a body of knowledge to be transmitted (M. Smith).

On the whole these authors explain the concept of curriculum in similar ways, the difference lying only in nuances.

Alan Tom (Tom, 1984) defines the essence of curriculum shortly and precisely as ‘a program for teaching and education’.

B. Moon (Moon, 2002) remarks that the concept of curriculum embraces the relationship of subjects and the selection of content, teaching methods and everything else that secures a successful learning and the assessment of the learning outcomes.

V. Schubert (Schubert, 1986) names the basic curriculum concepts – the choice of aims, the content of teaching and experience, organisation and assessment. It all has something in common with Aristotle’s conception on the categorisation of knowledge and its aspects:

- The theoretical aspect - a program, which includes definite knowledge, theories;
- The practical aspect:
  - a process, which includes thinking and action during the process of learning;
  - praxis, which finds its expression in thinking and in which the action is assessed according to its expedience;
- The productive aspect - outcomes, understood as the competences obtained.

In Latvia the explanation of the concept of curriculum which is given in the explanatory dictionary of pedagogical terms (*Pedagoģijas terminu skaidrojošā vārdnīca*, 2000) is used:

The curriculum is the fundamental document of the education system, a document, which, in accordance with the education stage, the mode, the target group, the education standards and the corresponding regulations, determines the content of the education offered by the educational institution, the terms and the provision for the acquisition process and, on the grounds of the investigation of the local needs and circumstances and their changeability if there arises a need. The constituent components of the curriculum are:

- the aims and objectives,
- requirements of preliminary education,
- the content of education, the strategy of the curriculum, the organization, the methods used,
- the plan of the implementation of the curriculum in time and space,
- the estimate of the resources needed for the implementation of the curriculum,
- requirements to the assessment of the education obtained,
- requirements to regular evaluation of the curriculum.

There are three levels of curricula: the state or the national education curriculum, the school education curriculum and the subject curriculum.’

There are different concepts of the curricula. A more detailed analysis has been given by J. Goodlad (1997). He distinguishes five concepts of curricula:

- The ideal curriculum - it is defined by its creator and the designers,

- The official curriculum - the aims of it are confirmed by the state and the educational boards (ministries of education), and it is adopted by the educational institutions,
- The comprehended or perceived curriculum - it enjoys the society's confidence because it reflects the society's subjective points of view on what should be taught,
- The operative curriculum - it is a curriculum put into practice in class,
- The experience-based curriculum - it is a curriculum which the learners have gone through in class.

The closer the concepts of different curricula, the more effective is the curriculum. The realisation of what has been intended is more precise, and the gain corresponds to a greater extent to the needs and development of both the society in its entirety and each single personality.

### **Point of Integrated Curriculum**

Education curricula serve also for learning integration. Many scientists of pedagogy have made studies of integrated curriculum.

K. Lake (2006) explains the integrated curriculum as an interdisciplinary curriculum, which prepares pupils for lifelong studies or lifelong education.

B. Shoemaker (1989) defines the integrated curriculum as of interdisciplinary topics, which form pithy associations, which in their turn are connected with the content of the studies but at the same time are much wider.

R.W. Tyler (1958) explains the integrated curriculum in a more simple and understandable way. He speaks about horizontal and vertical integration. Vertical integration means that there is coordination of sequential subjects. For example, the coordination of mathematics in forms 5 and 6. In horizontal integration there is coordination of subjects to be learned simultaneously, for example, between geography and physics in form 8. Thus, vertical integration refers to ensuring the succession of the content of learning, but horizontal integration refers to ensuring cross- disciplinary ties.

J.L. McBrien and R.S. Brandt (1997) give their explanation of curricula integration. They state that integration is a philosophy of teaching in which the content is drawn from several subject areas to focus on a particular topic or theme. For example, when simultaneously learning the topic 'The Sea' in mathematics, geography and history, calculations connected with it are made in mathematics, the varieties of seas, their peculiarities and forms of life in them are learned in geography, but the historical migration of people on the coasts and their diversity of cultures, social and judicial systems are learned in history. McBrien and Brandt draw attention to the elements, which characterise effective integrated learning:

- A topic that lends itself to study from several points of view;
- Two to five valuable themes (or essential questions) the teacher wants the students to explore;

- An approach and activities to further students' understanding more than is possible in a traditional, single-discipline unit.

D. Pratt (1994) singles out five fundamental approaches to be taken into consideration when designing integrated education curricula:

- 1) the integration of education curriculum can be only partial;
- 2) integration of knowledge takes place in every subject;
- 3) the best way of integrating the content is to integrate people;
- 4) in order to attain integration, aspire to it;
- 5) the chief integration is learning and life integration.

R. Fogarty (1991) distinguishes ten kinds of integrating curriculum:

- fragmented, when the learner acquires separate, distinct disciplines, which are internally integrated in the content, but they are not interconnected;
- connected, when the topics in the disciplines are connected and there develops undivided understanding of the basic concepts;
- nested, when the teacher uses every element of the content within each subject to develop various skills of the learners;
- sequenced, when similar ideas are taught in coordination, although the subjects are separate;
- shared, when two or more subject teachers plan the content of learning, which includes definite notions and connections;
- webbed, when one and the same topic is included in the content of many subjects;
- threaded, when mastering general skills (reasoning skills, social skills, study skills) are threaded throughout the disciplines;
- integrated, when they overlap multiple disciplines, encourage to see interconnectedness and interrelations among disciplines;
- immersed, when the disciplines become part of the learner's lens of expertise: the learner filters all content through this lens and becomes immersed in his or her own experience;
- networked, when the learner filters all learning through the expert's eye and makes internal connections that lead to external networks of experts in related fields.

Each of the above mentioned kinds of curricula can find its application and place at a definite stage of the education system. For example, integrated learning is successfully used in many elementary schools, but nested integration is well known at the stage of lower secondary school.

K. Lake (2006) states that integrated curricula includes:

- a combination of subjects;
- an emphasis on projects;
- sources that go beyond textbooks;

- relationships among concepts;
- thematic units as organising principles;
- flexible schedules;
- flexible learner grouping.

When designing curricula, especially integrated curricula, several principles should be taken into consideration. They have been analysed by V. Carr (1983):

- coordination and balance of the subjects embraced, the main criterion of which is the holistic development of the child (pupil);
- the amount and depth (compliance of the outcomes of learning and the aims);
- internal coherence and the unity of subjects;
- continuity (transition from one educational stage to the next, from the unknown to the known, respect for the peculiarities of man's developmental stages);
- development process (in conformity with the spiral principle each following stage offers qualitative improvement of one's experience, avoidance of mechanical repetition).

In Latvia the following principles of devising curricula are paid special attention to:

- the selection of the content (definition of the chief concepts, advancement from memorising to investigation);
- the choice of the learning strategy (the relationship and unity of learning and teaching);
- the assessment of the learning outcomes (techniques, forms and procedure).

Relatively less attention in the curricula is paid to the development of the learners' individual abilities and the unity, coordination and balance of subjects. Integrated curricula offer wider opportunities to balance and coordinate the subjects more successfully, to attend to the development of each learner's personality, use more interdisciplinary topics and the themes winding through the subjects. One of such themes is citizenship education.

Integration of education curricula is not an end in itself. Its expedience has been studied by many scientists. M. Lipson (1993) characterises the positive effects of integrated curricula. They are as follows:

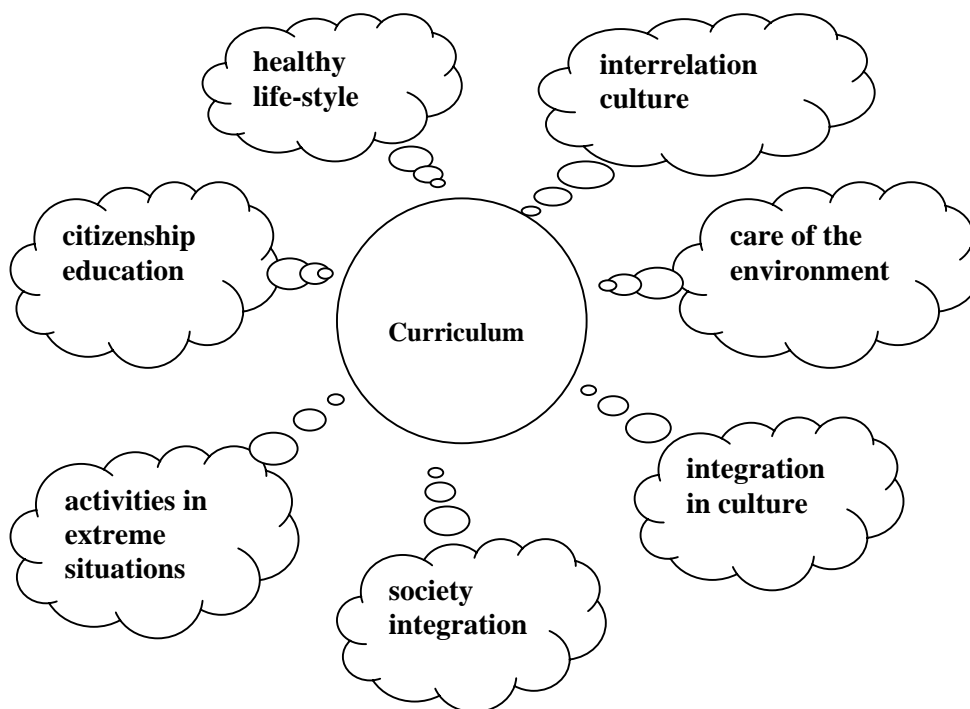
- an integrated curriculum helps the learners develop multiple skills;
- an integrated knowledge base leads to faster retrieval of information;
- multiple perspectives, offered by the curriculum, lead to a more integrated knowledge base, which in its turn helps the learners perceive the world in integrity;
- an integrated curriculum encourages depth and breadth in learning;
- an integrated curriculum promotes positive attitude in learners;
- an integrated curriculum provides for more quality time for exploration.

Thus, integrated curricula offer more opportunities for a more successful realisation of citizenship education, because more time is allotted to exploration, they ensure the acquisition of deep and integrated knowledge, promote the development of the learners' multiple skills, among them critical thinking skills, which are indispensable in the appraisal of the increasing information stream coming in.

### Studies of the Implementation of Integration Curriculum in Latvia

In Latvia curriculum integration is more connected with the integration of definite topics or the realisation of interdisciplinary ties. It is planned in official curricula.

**Figure 1: Interdisciplinary topics in the curriculum**



In the integrated education curricula themes that are connected with issues of the environment, safety and health prevail: less common are themes of citizenship education, although topics on the environment, safety and health are also connected with citizenship education.

Topics on safety are learned in classes of natural sciences, social sciences, housekeeping, physics, chemistry, sports, etc. Topics on health education are integrated in social sciences, natural sciences, biology, chemistry, physics, housekeeping, sports,



etc. Environmental education is carried out in social sciences, physics, chemistry, biology, mathematics, languages, the sphere of art subjects, etc.

The content of such subjects as social sciences, geography, housekeeping, and sport includes components which help the learners investigate and understand the regularities of social life, develop skills enabling them to make ethical choices, express and defend their opinions on the processes going on around, make a deliberate search for and find their place in the social world.

Beginning with the school year 2005/2006 a new integrated subject 'social sciences' was introduced in all the basic general education curricula. The objective of social sciences is to help learners understand themselves, the processes going on in society, motivate learners to be socially active in the social processes, and make by themselves well-considered and substantiated choices. Social sciences enable learners to develop skills of making ethical choices when evaluating what is ongoing from a moral aspect, and when building their own system of values in accordance with the fundamental values of humanism and democracy.

The 19 future secondary school teachers and 26 working teachers who participated in the survey were offered a choice of three integration models:

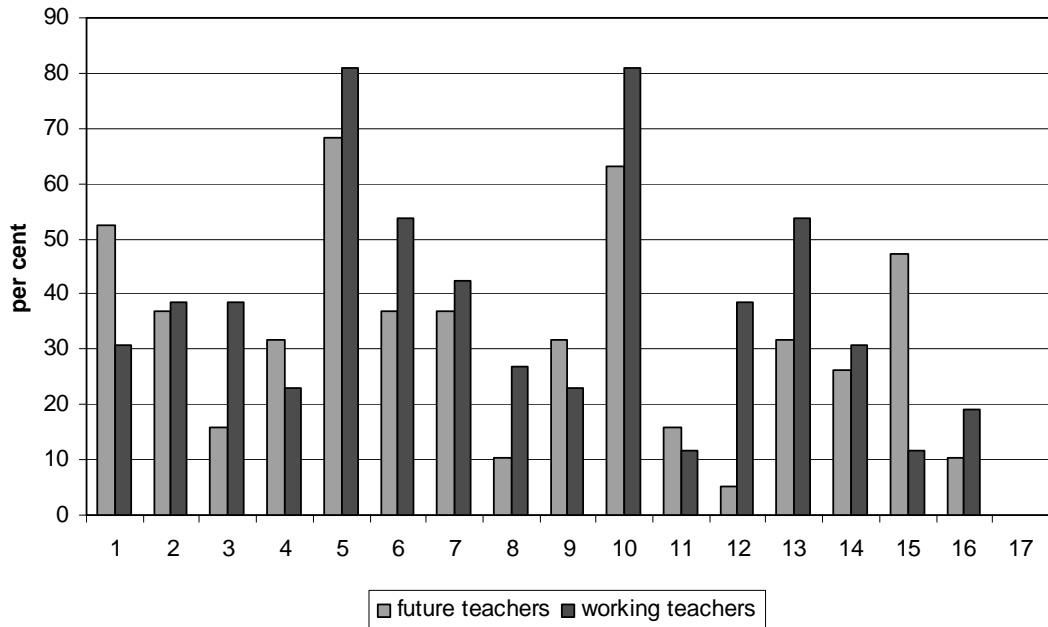
- Nested, when the teacher uses every element of the content within each subject to develop various skills of the learners;
- Shared, when two or more subject teachers plan the content of learning, which includes definite notions and connections;
- Webbed, when one and the same topic is included in the content of many subjects.

The teachers and the teacher students mainly pointed out webbed integration, in which one and the same topic is included in the content of the subjects (67 %).

It is therefore essential to clarify which themes can be more successfully included in the content of the subjects because this kind of curriculum integration is more widespread and easier for teachers to understand.

Further it was elucidated which interdisciplinary themes the respondents considered worth including in the integrated curricula.

**Diagram nr.1. Interdisciplinary Topics**



1. topics on safety;
2. topics on health education;
3. topics on environmental education;
4. communication with others;
5. interaction and communication;
6. development of interaction skills;
7. use of languages;
8. development of citizenship;
9. carrying out a case study;
10. use of information technology;
11. history of culture;
12. culture dialogues;
13. topics on ethics;
14. family education;
15. children's rights and duties;
16. citizen rights and duties;
17. other answers.

The teachers and the teacher students acknowledge that in the curriculum integration the topics giving the best results are interaction and communication, and the use of information technology. There was unanimity among the respondents that interrelation

culture is one of the thematic blocks best suited for curriculum integration. It is the positive experience of the teachers.

Further, there are differences seen in the selection of the themes. The working teachers pointed out such interdisciplinary topics as topics on ethics, and the development of cooperation skills. The teacher students in their turn pointed out topics on safety and children's rights and duties. These themes refer, to a great extent, to the thematic blocks of social integration and interrelation culture. In contemporary multicultural society the issues on social integration are consequential in everyday situations. They are connected with issues of ethics, mastering cooperation skills and children's rights and duties.

Both the teachers and the teacher students mention the interdisciplinary topics on history of culture, citizens' duties and development of citizenship as less applicable. The history of culture is conventionally a separate subject, but its themes can be employed in curriculum education, too. The low estimation of the citizenship education in the curricula integration was a surprise. It could be explained with the fact that present-day teachers have insufficient experience of citizenship education. Therefore it is difficult to evaluate fully the role of citizenship education in the curriculum integration.

It gives rise to reflection that there is a great difference between the future teachers' and the working teachers' evaluation of such interdisciplinary topics as culture dialogues (5%-38%), children's rights and duties (47%-11%), citizenship development (10%-42%), issues on safety (52%-31%), topics on ethics (31%-54%), and issues on environmental education (16%-38%). It can be explained with the fact that the future teachers in their evaluations have to a certain extent retained the learners' point of view, but the teachers give their evaluation from the point of view of their everyday experience. Here appears the difference between the teacher's and the learner's attitude towards the improvement of the content of learning. The learners have a tendency to see the world in its entirety, but the teachers are only absorbed in the sphere of the subject they teach. To a great extent it is connected with the development of innovative teacher education curriculum, keeping in conformity with the reality of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and the aims of democratic, inclusive, tolerant society.

### **Results of Research in Latvia**

The studies of the educators' points of view on the possibilities of education curriculum integration discovered a discrepancy between the state integrated curriculum and what is really used in practical study process. The teachers insufficiently use the following topics on citizenship education in the curriculum integration process: the development of citizenship – 27%, and citizen rights and duties – 19%. Neither have the teachers highly evaluated the following topics subordinated to citizenship education: topics on environment – 38%, topics on health education – 38%, and topics on safety – 30%. The above-mentioned topics are already included in both education standards and curricula, but their effectiveness in the learning process has not been fully estimated yet. There is an opportunity for the improvement of integrated curricula by making more effective use of issues on citizenship education. Greater attention should also be paid to teacher education and continuing education curricula. The significance of citizenship education increases more and more under the influence of the globalisation process. It is of great

importance for every learner to identify himself both as a citizen of a definite country (here Latvia) and as a citizen of a united Europe and the world, to see the world in the variety of relationships of objects and phenomena.

### Conclusions

1. The essence of education curricula is a targeted planning of the learning process and the content, in accordance with the aims of education set, which in their turn are connected with the values of society.
2. Education curriculum integration develops in different ways - the planning of the content of one subject or simultaneously of several subjects, as well as planning the skills to be mastered in one subject or simultaneously in several subjects. There are ten kinds of integrated curricula (Fogarty). When integrating a curriculum the integration of knowledge takes place in each subject and a thematic unity of the subjects is realised.
3. Integrated curricula helps the learners develop multiple skills, as well as a positive attitude to learning. Integrated knowledge helps them in the perception and analysis of the new information, be aware of themselves in the global world, and develop a unitary world perception, thus promoting the realisation of citizenship education.
4. Integrated curricula also include issues on citizenship education. They are found in the content of many subjects, especially in the subjects belonging to the sphere of social sciences, and they can be successfully used in curriculum integration.
5. In the poll the working teachers and the future teachers single out one of the kinds of education integrated curriculum - webbed integration - when the topic is included in the content of different subjects. The teachers consider that the interdisciplinary themes of the potential curriculum integration should be the topics of interrelation culture and social integration, although the official curricula envisage such integration themes as environment, health and safety.
6. The study of the issue showed a discrepancy between the interdisciplinary topics in the official curriculum and those used by the teachers, among which are also topics on citizenship education.
7. The results of the study call for further investigation of the reasons causing the discrepancy between what has been planned and what is being done in the study process concerning the use of topics on citizenship education in the curricula integration.

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