

ЛІНГВІСТИЧНЕ ЗАБЕЗПЕЧЕННЯ ОСВІТЯНСЬКОЇ ДІЯЛЬНОСТІ



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EDUCATION CONTENT ISSUES: THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL ASPECTS

The article deals with the leading theories of education content structuring and determines the present day tendencies in education curriculum development. The historic nature of the content of education is asserted. The philosophical and pedagogical approaches providing for the development of theories of education content structuring are considered. Some specific features of education content development in teaching foreign languages on the basis of different theories of education content structuring are singled out.

Keywords: education content; education content structuring; historic nature; theory; development; tendencies; foreign language education content.

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Вопросы содержания образования: теоретические и практические аспекты

Характеризуются основные теории содержания образования, определяются современные тенденции его формирования. Освещаются исторические аспекты развития концепций содержа-

ния образования. Теории содержания образования отражают разные философские и педагогические подходы, которые оказывают влияние на определение целей образования, отбор содержания, выбор методов обучения и учебных материалов. Раскрывается специфика выбора и формирования содержания образования в сфере иноязычного образования в соответствии с базовыми положениями различных теорий содержания образования.

Ключевые слова: содержание образования; структурирование содержания образования; исторический характер; теория; развитие; тенденции; содержание иноязычного образования.

Problem Setting. The content of education is determined by the goals and tasks a society sets before the educational system as requirements providing for its development at every stage of the historic progress. Thus the content of education is of historic nature and undergoes changes because of political, social, economic, cultural and other transformations taking place within a society. The economy development level, the level of existing scientific knowledge and a certain type of social relations in a society are the aspects that influence the approaches to education content modification.

Recent Research and Literature Analysis. The accumulated data on selecting and structuring the content of education have been analysed by A. Aleksiuik, R. Vendrovska, S. Goncharenko, B. Yesipov, V. Kraievsky, V. Lednioy, I. Lerner, Yu. Maliovanuy, V. Pomogayby, O. Savchenko, M. Skatkin and others. The works of I. Zverev, N. Antonov, P. Novikov, P. Kulagin, V. Onishuk, M. Skatkin present analyses of the theory of a subject, of approaches to working out teaching programmes and plans, to structuring the teaching material. However, being strongly influenced by the social and political determinants within a society, the aspects of educational content development reflect new priorities and deserve further study.

The Purpose of the Paper is to focus on the leading theories of education content organization and determine the present day tendencies in curriculum development.

Paper Main Body. Education is generally expected to meet the demands of the society which leads to adapting the content of education at different educational levels. The leading scientific theories of the content of education go back to the end of XVIII – the early XIX centuries. They are usually differentiated as the theories of material education and of formal education.

The proponents of the theory of material education (encyclopedic learning) consider that the main goal of education is to transfer as much knowledge as possible. These ideas were asserted by such famous figures of the past as Ya. A. Komensky and G. Spencer and are supported by many these days. However, its opponents believe that following the material education theory the learners turn out to be overloaded with the information.

The proponents of the formal education theory (the theory of didactic formalism) consider education a tool for the development of one's abilities, cognitive interests, attention and thinking. The source of knowledge they see in the intellect and reasoning. Thus, they make the stress on the development of one's intellect and abilities. In the selection of the content of education they suggest considering the

priority of the developmental value of the disciplines to be studied, believing that Mathematics and Classical Language studies are most valuable in the achievement of the given goal. In the history of Pedagogics the ideas of this theory were shared by John Locke, J. H. Pestalozzi, J. Herbart and others.

It should be mentioned that both of these theories have had supporters and opponents. In XIX century they were strongly criticized by K. Ushynsky who believed that the system of education had to develop one's intellectual abilities, enrich his/her knowledge and teach how to use it. He was sure that none of the theories could be applied in the pure form. In fact he asserted the idea of the unity of dialectic materialism and didactic formalism, still supported by many scholars and educators.

Late XIX – early XX century marked the rise of a new theory, the theory of didactic pragmatism applied for compiling the content of education. It marked the reaction to the feeling of dissatisfaction caused by both theories, that of dialectic materialism and didactic formalism. The founder of the new theory in the USA was John Dewey and similar ideas in Europe were promoted by a German educator G. Kerschenshteiner. The supporters of the theory saw the source of the content of education in pupils' public and individual activity and not in learning separate subjects. They wanted the content of education to be reflected in interdisciplinary knowledge systems, the acquisition of which required collective efforts and practical activities directed at solving the tasks set. It presupposed the use of a variety of game forms in training and learning, setting practical tasks and engaging learners in individual independent work in order to intensify their cognitive and physical activity.

The theory of didactic pragmatism had a significant impact on the content and methods of teaching in American schools. The students were allowed to enjoy a maximum freedom in choosing subjects for learning. In fact the process of teaching turned out to be oriented at satisfying learners' personal needs and interests. However, according to the existing data the implementation of this theory led to a significant decline in the level of education in the USA and was strongly criticized in the middle of XX century.

Although the theories of didactic materialism, didactic formalism, didactic utilitarianism did not stand the test of time, they strongly affected modern approaches to the formation of the content of education. Nowadays the term “curriculum” is used to discuss the aspects of the content of education. It is mainly used in two meanings. One of them points to the subjects that are taught by a school, college or other educational institution, the other concerns the things that are studied in a particular subject. In the recent years the term has encompassed not only the content of educational material, but the whole process of training and teaching, including training materials, equipment, examinations, teacher training etc.

Researcher M. Johnson defines curriculum as “a structured series of learning outcomes” [5, p. 130]. E. Eysner and E. Vallans believe that the term “curriculum” is “associated with what can be learned and what can be taught to whom, where and when” [4, p. 2]. T. Moiseenko's study asserts that the term “curriculum” covers a set

of objectives, content, methods and forms of education, educative aspects, teaching resources etc. [2, p. 19].

Discussions on the curriculum theory reveal different philosophical and pedagogical approaches affecting the determination of educational objectives, content, methods and choice of educational materials. E. Eysner and E. Vallans single out five leading trends in institutional education curriculum developments that concern every subject area:

1) oriented at fostering the cognitive processes in learning in belief that the main function of the educational institution is not to transfer a predetermined educational content but to teach students cognitive skills, develop their cognitive abilities and teach them how to learn. For example, for those engaged in teaching foreign languages it means that the goal of language learning is not a perfect mastery of a foreign language but preparing learners for further foreign language learning;

2) defined as self-actualization or experience accumulation trend, according to which learning has to become a part of any learner's life providing the curriculum corresponds to a certain level of his/her development. This trend challenges the educational value of «Foreign Language» as a curriculum discipline at a secondary school level as the relevance of foreign language proficiency is often associated primarily with the needs of adults; thus this approach touches upon the aspect of the age appropriate for foreign language learning;

3) the social appropriateness trend – makes the stress on the needs of a society, determining that education and curriculum should meet those needs; the foreign language immersion programmes in Canada serve as an example;

4) academic rationalism supports the value of classic education as a core of the curriculum. Those supporting the given approach argue that foreign language learning is essential as it provides and ensures the access to the great cultural heritage of the past;

5) considers the curriculum as a technology focusing on educational goals and use of technical devices [4, p. 9–11].

Foreign researchers point out that these five approaches are not mutually exclusive stressing that following any of them, taken separately, may lead to negative consequences. The pedagogical theories and teaching practice developed abroad offer a great number of curriculum conception models. They include the traditional ones with the fixed time of learning and the flexible ones as well as the models of out of school learning schemes. However, the implementation of any curriculum requires thorough consideration of its leading provisions, educational objectives, educational content and special professional development programmes for the teaching staff.

The theoretical principles of curriculum conceptions provide the basis for subject curriculum theory developments as the aspects of education content selection, the sequence of material to be learned, teaching methods and forms etc. are the focus of didactic researches, studies, discussions and experiments and are essential for efficient teaching and learning programmes. For example, if it concerns foreign language teaching and learning in organized educational context, the second part of XX century

marked the period of strong criticism of language teaching courses based on the “traditional grammar structured” principle which paved the way to situational, semantic and socio-lingual criteria of linguistic material selection for teaching purposes and rejection of formal organization of teaching material, which led to focusing on the ideas of meaningful communication in language teaching and acquisition.

Education in the general sense comprises what has been acquired by a person during his/her studies at educational institutions of different levels, in the course of self-studies and self-education and accumulation of information from a variety of information sources and means leading to the mastery of scientific knowledge allowing for learners’ acquisition of habits and skills according to certain philosophical, moral, aesthetic ideas and opinions as an integral part of educational content [4, p. 203].

The famous Russian scholar I. Ya. Lerner asserts that the global function of teaching is the transfer of the content of social culture, stressing that an individual turns into a person after he/she has mastered the social experience content.

Teaching and learning foreign languages may serve as a good example of the given understanding as it is directed at and creates the conditions for considering and mastering the education content elements singled out by I. Ya. Lerner: acquisition of knowledge, habits and skills, the experience of creative activity and the experience of emotional-creative attitude. Although the discipline «Foreign Language» belongs to the subjects with the leading component «means of activity», for centuries it has been taught and learned in educational institutions as a means of transfer and accumulation of scientific knowledge and cultural heritage created by mankind.

The analysis of pedagogical and methodological sources points out that the evolution of humanity is reflected in the transformations in school and higher education priorities and teaching programmes (curriculum). The study of the historical data proves that teaching and learning languages has been a priority in organized (institutionalized) education. The introduction of foreign language learning in the educational content (classical languages, modern languages) has always been supported by theoretical educational researches and has been considered a prerequisite and index of one’s level of education. However the substantiation of the importance of foreign language teaching and learning in institutionalized education could be based on different educational conceptions and theories, stressing its relevance as a means of knowledge accumulation or the tool for one’s cognitive and intellectual development.

The well-known programme of «seven free arts» that originated in Ancient Rome at the beginning of V century included among other sciences grammar, rhetoric and dialectics – the spheres (subjects) learning of which directly or indirectly was oriented at the achievement of a rather high level of language education.

M. F. Quintilian, one of the prominent figures of the past, developing the pedagogical ideas of Plutarch asserted that the highest level of education presupposes the mastery of the rhetoric as an art within a certain system of education. He stressed that by the age of 7 a child has to master the basic elements of grammar of the Latin and Greek languages. He believed that systematic education had to start with the

learning of a foreign language and believed that it would make it easier for a child to learn the rules of the native language [3].

The importance of learning grammar has been proved for centuries by its relevance to one's logical thinking development and intellectual growth. Besides, regardless of the changes in the understanding of the goals of education, its content and methods of education and training, literature has always remained the important source of education, to master which one needed not just to be literate, but to be proficient in languages in which the literary sources were written. The given fact led to teaching and learning in Latin and Greek, having the status of the languages of the classics of the Antic world, at a primary and post primary educational levels in Europe, especially in church schools and at higher education institutions. Besides, it explains why philosophers, teachers, linguists, psychologists and learned scholars have been studying the problem of teaching foreign languages for centuries. As a result a number of theoretical approaches to foreign language teaching and learning have been developed.

Present day innovations in education in Ukraine suggest following a competence-oriented approach to education content development and structuring. According to the law "On Higher Education" a competence is understood as a dynamic combination of knowledge, skills and practical habits, modes of thinking, professional, philosophical and civic qualities, moral and ethical values determining a person's ability to successfully carry out vocational and further learning activities and a result of one's learning at a certain level of higher education [1]. The approach prompts the modification of the educational content in higher education and widening the scope of skills and abilities to be mastered by a graduate. In teaching and learning foreign languages it certainly demands the transformation of teaching programmes as they have to ensure the acquisition of general and professional competences within a given speciality.

Conclusion. The study of scientific data on the issues of curriculum development allows to determine some modern priorities in its remodeling in the national educational system: – competence-based content modernization (focusing on preparing the youth to adapting to life circumstances, to realizing one's personal and professional potential, to serving the interests of the community and the state); – selfeducation-oriented trend (focusing on independent acquisition of knowledge and information, their analysis and use, reducing the amount of information selected for the direct transfer and changing the ratio between the structural elements of educational content, highlighting the acquisition of the modes of cognition and gaining personal experience of creative activity); – making the teaching programmes more flexible and open, making provisions for their variability; – focus on improving and raising the level of foreign language learning (considering the proficiency in a foreign language a means to improve one's competitiveness at the labour market and a means of efficient intercultural communication and cooperation); – interdisciplinary orientation serving the development of one's scientific outlook and thinking (allowing for one's realization of the role of a human being in the acquisition of the world); – focus on the mastery of information technologies.

The study proves that those engaged in the curriculum development issues have to realize that teaching cannot be based on a separate theoretical approach, it should and may incorporate the progressive ideas of a number of them depending on the specific goals of teaching, every specific teaching situation, the type of educational establishment, the level of education to be provided, specific pedagogical context etc.

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Питання змісту освіти: теоретичні та практичні аспекти

У статті розглянуто основні теорії змісту освіти і визначено сучасні тенденції формування останнього. Висвітлено історичні аспекти розвитку концепцій формування змісту освіти. Охарактеризовано пріоритети теорій змісту освіти з точки зору концепцій матеріальної, формальної, прагматичної освіти. Теорії змісту освіти відображають різні філософські і педагогічні підходи, що впливають на визначення цілей освіти, відбір змісту, методів навчання й навчальних матеріалів. Наголошено на доцільності врахування положень різних теорій змісту освіти при формуванні навчальної програми з певної навчальної дисципліни для конкретного рівня освіти, оскільки науковцями доведено хибність абсолютизації однієї і доцільність зваженого використання елементів різних з них. Запропоновано тлумачення терміна «навчальна програма» й виділено напрями побудови і структурування змісту освіти. Тенденції формування змісту освіти знаходять прояв у всіх освітніх предметних сферах, зокрема у сфері вищої освіти. Окреслено специфіку відбору й формування змісту іншомовної освіти відповідно до базових положень різних теорій змісту освіти.

Ключові слова: зміст освіти; структурування змісту освіти; історичний характер; теорія; розвиток; тенденції; зміст іншомовної освіти.

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