

THEORY AND METHODS OF TEACHING AND EDUCATION

**TENDENCIES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONTENT
OF PRIMARY EDUCATION IN UKRAINE
IN THE FIRST HALF OF 1990s**

T. Havrylenko¹

Abstract

The article deals with the development of the content of primary education in Ukraine in the first half of the 1990s. On the basis of the analysis of curriculums, programmes and textbooks published during this period the main tendencies of its development were defined (depoliticization, national orientation, deunification, variability, humanitarization, differentiation, integration).

Keywords: content of primary education, school curricula, programmes, textbooks, tendencies, Ukraine.

Since Ukraine was proclaimed an independent state in 1991 there have been fundamental changes taken place in the development of school education, in particular they were connected with its first level – primary school. The following new theoretical-methodological principles of its functioning are defined in the legislative documents (Law of Ukraine “On Education”, 1991; Concept of Comprehensive School, 1991; State National Education Programme (“Ukraine of the 21st century”), 1993) adopted during the first half of the 1990s: democracy, humanism, childcentrism, national orientation, etc. These transformations demanded essential renovation of the content of primary education.

Depoliticization and deideologization of the content of primary education, fulfillment with national component were considered to be the most important tasks under the conditions of revival of the national primary school. Therefore, political and ideological components were removed from the curriculums meant for the 1st – 3^d and the 1st – 4th

¹ Tatiana Havrylenko, Candidate of Pedagogical Sciences, Associate Professor; Institute of Pedagogics of NAPS of Ukraine, Kyiv, Ukraine.

classes (in 1986 – 2000 there were three-year and four-year of studies primary schools functioning in Ukraine simultaneously; it was connected with the age of pupils who started to go to school being 6 or 7 year old children) which were issued in 1992. The content of teaching material, especially in reading, language, natural science and music aimed at the formation of national consciousness of junior pupils, love for their native land and nation. The introduction of new school subjects such as Ethnology and Native Land played an important role in encouraging primary school pupils to study national history, culture, traditions and customs [5; 6]. School textbooks for primary school pupils underwent appropriate changes as well. The content of them differed from that existed during the Soviet period: the constituent part of it was a Ukrainian one.

Let us focus on the fact that under the conditions of changes of pedagogical orientations there was a tendency to refuse standard curriculums, programmes identical textbooks for all schools. The Ministry of Education of Ukraine suggested to use basic curriculums together with other ten variable curriculums for three-year and four-year of studies primary schools with the Ukrainian language of teaching. Taking into account pupils' interests and needs, appropriate teaching resource base and teachers' education School Council was allowed to choose the necessary variant of the curriculum [4, p. 4]. Democratization in education caused the emergence of numerous variable curriculums for different subjects and courses in primary school, the creation of the first alternative textbooks on literacy and reading [3, pp. 98-99]. In general, appreciating tendencies of deunification concerning primary education content, introduction of its variability we should note that the suggested variable curriculums did not always answer the tasks of primary education and junior pupils' age peculiarities.

The fact that two components – a state one and a school one – were distinguished within the structure of the primary school curriculum was an innovative tendency of the researched period. The first one meant to provide every pupil with socially necessary scope and level of knowledge, abilities and skills. This component included necessary school subjects taken from language (the Ukrainian and Russian languages), mathematical (Mathematics and Fundamentals of Computer Science), aesthetic (Fine Art, Music), health-improving and labour (Physical Training, Labor Training) cycles [4, p. 10-11; 2, p. 55].

School component was determined by School Council and was aimed at individualization and differentiation of training, existence of

national and regional particularities in the content of primary education. The time left for this component was recommended to use in primary classes for the arrangement of developmental lessons with groups of pupils or separate pupils; intensification in studying certain subjects (the Ukrainian Language, Mathematics, Labor Training, etc.); introduction of additional courses (Foreign Language, Choreography, etc.) [4, p. 2-3; 2, p. 54]. We should mention that since the 1993/1994 school year selective-obligatory subjects have been included into the school component, and it made it possible to extend junior pupils' knowledge and skills in the Ukrainian language first of all; to complete public educational minimum by means of introduction of such courses as Ethnology, Native Land, Man and Environment; to conduct special lessons in life and health protection of pupils. Selective-obligatory subjects as well as the subjects from the state component were studied by the whole class simultaneously. As a result of their introduction the quantity of school hours fixed for the school component was doubled – up to 23-25 % [2, p. 54]. As we can see, pedagogical staffs were given the right to choose one of the suggested curriculums as well as to participate in their development directly.

During the mentioned period a great attention was paid to the humanitarization of the content of primary education; it means the intensification of its linguistic, social and aesthetic components, the content of mathematical and natural components was filled with special knowledge. The humanitarian nature of the content of primary education provided pupils with possibility to get acquainted with regional peculiarities of their native land and a variety of folklore genres [7, p. 6].

The differentiation of the content of primary education in the first half of the 1990s became the distinctive tendency of its development. In particular the Ministry of Education of Ukraine suggested curriculums for different types of schools that made differentiation and individualization of education possible in accordance with pupils' needs and abilities. Educational programmes suggested the material for the pupils with different levels of attainment. It is important that during the mentioned period the well-known Ukrainian scientist M.V. Bohdanovych prepared a new type of textbook in order to study the elementary course in Mathematics; it was a two-level textbook which made it possible to master the content of educational material at different levels of its complexity, and consequently to carry out the differentiation approach in teaching junior pupils [1].

An attempt to approximate the content of primary education to the world practice caused abandoning a strict subjectcentrism through the introduction of the following integrated training courses: Music and Motion, Creative Work, Man and Environment. As O.Y. Savchenko noted their introduction made it possible to form qualitatively new knowledge in junior pupils, "to study an object comprehensively, to show the connection between phenomena, to teach how to analyse, compare, generalize" [7, p. 7]. At the same time there was a real opportunity to make the weekly load in primary classes shorter, to reduce the number of subjects, and as a result to eliminate the overload for junior pupils.

In 1996 a new Law of Ukraine "On Education" which started the development of state standards of general education was adopted. Thus, a new stage in the development of the content of primary education began, and standardization of it became its main tendency.

Therefore, having analysed curriculums, programmes and textbooks for primary school published in Ukraine in the first half of the 1990s we can conclude that there were the following main tendencies in the development of the content of primary education taken place during the mentioned period: depoliticization and introduction of national component into its content; deunification and intensification of its variability; humanitarization, differentiation and integration.

References:

1. Богданович М. В. Математика: підр. для 2 кл. чотирирічн. почат. шк. – Київ: Рад. шк., 1991. – 208 с.
2. Дейкун Д. І. Навчальні плани національних шкіл // Початкова школа – 1993. – № 8. – С. 54-58.
3. Кодлюк Я. Теорія і практика підручникотворення в початковій освіті: підручник. – Київ: Наш час, 2006. – 368 с.
4. Навчальні плани денних загальноосвітніх шкіл Української РСР на 1991/92 навчальний рік // Інформаційний збірник Міністерства народної освіти Української РСР. – 1991. – № 7. – С. 2-21.
5. Програми середньої загальноосвітньої школи. 1-3 класи. – Київ: Освіта, 1992. – 240 с.
6. Програми середньої загальноосвітньої школи. 1-4 класи. – Київ: Освіта, 1992. – 272 с.
7. Савченко О. Я. Реформування змісту початкової освіти // Початкова школа – 1996. – № 1. – С. 4-8.