

УДК 371

**DEVELOPING INTEGRATED TEACHING SKILLS
FOR JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS
OF THE NORTHERN MOUNTAINOUS REGION OF VIETNAM**

T. L. Le

*PhD in Education, Lecturer,
e-mail: lethuylinhsptn@gmail.com,
0000-0001-7927-401X,
Thai Nguyen Pedagogical University,
Thai Nguyen, Vietnam*

Abstract. In the context of the renovation of general education in Vietnam, it is necessary to have practical measures to develop integrated teaching skills for junior high school teachers. This article analyzes the strengths, limitations and causes of developing integrated teaching skills for secondary school teachers and proposes some solutions to solve the problem: building up contents and processes to assess the current status of integrated teaching skills of junior high school teachers; identifying training goals to develop integrated teaching skills for secondary school teachers to meet the new 2019 general education program; developing training content to improve integrated teaching skills for secondary school teachers to meet the new general education program for 2019; identifying training modalities to develop integrated teaching skills for junior high school teachers.

Keywords: integration; integrated teaching skills; developing teaching skills; junior high school; teacher; Vietnam general education program.

1. Introduction

The attitude of integrated approach allows us to consider phenomena as a whole, save learning time and avoid manifestations of isolation and separation of knowledge, at the same time, it develops for learners dialectical thought, the ability to understand and apply knowledge in flexible ways. Integrated teaching helps students to combine knowledge of specific subjects in the curriculum in a variety of ways, so that knowledge acquisition will be deeper, more systematic and sustainable.

Integrated teaching is a trend of modern teaching in order to thoroughly solve two contradictions: between the requirement that content of general education must be deep and wide and the ability to absorb the knowledge of learners; between the function of the teacher is to organize and control the learner to master and form skills in individual subjects and the requirement of the society that the learner need to collect, select and process information related to many different fields to apply to real life.

Integrated teaching is a trend towards renewing the content of Vietnam's general education program in order to expand the fund of general knowledge for learners while reducing the burden and creating active initiative for students in the study process with issues of oriented awareness by topic.

To ensure that the above mentioned reform trends are successful, it is necessary to pay attention to developing integrated teaching skills for teachers – who directly organize and implement the integrated teaching program and also decide the teaching quality, because in fact, many teachers have been confused when applying integrated teaching to the subject that they are in charge of and have not prepared knowledge and skills to perform integrated teaching in interdisciplinary subjects [4].

Developing integrated teaching skills for junior high school teachers is necessary. Another reason is that the mountainous region of North Vietnam has distinct geographic, economic and cultural characteristics, therefore, it needs to have further research into the professional

development for teachers in this area to meet the requirements of the society.

2. The current situation of integrated teaching skills of junior high school teachers in the Northern mountainous region of Vietnam.

In order to find out the current situation of integrated teaching skills of junior high school teachers in the Northern mountainous region of Vietnam we conducted a questionnaire survey with teachers and educational administrators in 5 mountainous provinces in North Vietnam, including: Thai Nguyen, Bac Can, Tuyen Quang, Cao Bang and Ha Giang (459 survey questionnaires). In addition, we interviewed 30 teachers and administrators and studied 30 integrated teaching records. The survey results are as follows:

2.1. Current status of perceptions of junior high school teachers about integrated knowledge in school subjects.

The survey results are summarized as below:

1. The percentage of teachers who have had certain understanding of integration and integrated teaching is 85.8. However, their understanding is inadequate, lacks generality and does not clearly show the nature of the problem.

2. The percentage of teachers who have identified the role of integrated teaching is 83. In secondary schools the application of integrated teaching methods gives learners many important significances. In general, teachers understand the significances that integrated teaching will bring to learners and evaluate them at the most objective level [2].

3. The percentage of teachers who give prominence to the effectiveness of integrated teaching to the learner, from the way of learning, the way of synthesizing knowledge, the way of maximizing their creativity and the way of linking theoretical knowledge with practical knowledge is 78. However, there is still 17 % of teachers thinking that the practical experience of the students is unnecessary.

2.2. Current status of integrated teaching activities in junior high schools

Surveys in five provinces show that integrated teaching has been included in the lesson plan of teachers, but only in the introductory form and has not really developed. The integration of knowledge in teaching school subjects has not really promoted the effectiveness of integrated teaching. Teachers are interested in identifying goals, selecting methods, determining the level and importance of integrated teaching, but there are still shortcomings due to lack of specific guidance, skills and facilities.

2.3. Current situation of developing integrated teaching skills for teachers in junior high schools

The survey results are summarized as below:

1. The percentage of educational administrators in the schools who have had good understanding of integrated teaching and have applied this new trend to teaching is 85.2.

2. The percentage of the schools which have prepared the facilities, although not enough, to help teachers having basic conditions to familiar with this new teaching method is 89.

3. The percentage of the schools that have paid attention to training teachers is 22. Although the quantity as well as the quality is not much and can not make the majority of teachers to thoroughly understand integrated teaching, but it has partly changed the thought and the approach ability of the teacher.

3. Causes of the situation

3.1. Objective cause

a) 46 % of the teachers believe that the material facilities for the innovation of teaching methods in many secondary schools are not adequate;

b) 56 % of the teachers believe that the content and form of integrated teaching in junior high schools has been reformed in the direction of increasingly diverse,

nonetheless, so it is not deep, thorough and comprehensive. The content of the program is still academic and not practical. Although the content is very complete, the implementation is sketchy and formal. The teaching of integrated knowledge of social subjects is even more difficult because they are theoretical subjects and related contents is normally demanding.

c) 37.7 % of the teachers believe that the general education program has not changed in accordance with integrated teaching: a large amount of knowledge with a limited time is spent on teaching. Thus, the integration of related content is not much and not focused.

3.2. Subjective cause

a) 40.7 % of the teachers believe that current teachers are not trained to teach in an integrated way and integrated teaching does not happen often. Teachers do not voluntarily exploit and organize integrated teaching so the effectiveness is not high; the potential of subjects has not been fully exploited; teachers have not been deeply trained basic knowledge, methods and skills; they do not know how to organize students into practical experiences, etc.;

b) 48.4 % of the teachers believe that both teachers and students are familiar with old academic and passive education, so the transition to a new and active learning trend is difficult.

c) 24.8 % of the teachers believe that students are not able to synthesize knowledge and their use of knowledge in problem-solving is less flexible, so promoting the activity in mastering knowledge of students is very difficult.

d) 33.3 % of the teachers believe that teachers evaluate students' results based mainly on narrow theoretical knowledge in textbook without taking into account the practicalities of students' works.

4. Measures to develop integrated teaching skills for junior high school teachers

4.1. Building up content and process for evaluating the current situation of integrated teaching skills of junior high school teachers

Before evaluating the integrated teaching skills of the teaching staff, the schools need to prepare well the following contents: training for the principals, preparing teacher assessment guides, training for the participants of assessment.

Participants in the assessment and training should include:

a) Educational managers, professional officials appointed by superiors (principals, vice-principals of other secondary schools, professional staff of education departments, inspectors) who have a role of the first-party.

b) Teachers who are evaluated to play the second-party.

c) School principals playing the third-party.

d) The teachers' co-workers and colleagues who are evaluated as the third-party.

Methods to assess integrated teaching skills of teachers:

1. Collecting evidence to determine the teacher's attainment comparing with the criterion sample. There are four methods of collecting evidence: studying education and teaching records; interviewing teachers; attending class and evaluating from third-party assessment reports as the principals and colleagues. The teacher self-assessment is an important reference in the assessment process.

2. Assessment of teacher education and teaching records includes lesson plans, notebooks, teachers' materials to serve teaching such as documents, evidence of qualifications and achievements, comments from colleagues, professional groups and school managing boards, student's track records of study and training. Teacher records provide evidence to determine how well the teachers meet the given criteria.

3. Teacher interviews help to approach and assess teachers' understanding and fund

of knowledge, identify the ability to synthesize and arrange ideas, ability to use the knowledge in new situations.

4. Attending class is an important and accurate method for assessing knowledge, integrated teaching skills and communication skills of teachers. Through attending class, evidence can be gathered to assess multiple criteria.

5. Gathering information from third-party reports (principals, colleagues). Before conducting a teacher assessment, the principals and colleagues should be thoroughly trained to understand the role and responsibilities of the assessment and be provided with detailed instructions on how to fill out the evaluation form of the third-party.

4.2. Identifying training goals to develop integrated teaching skills for junior high school teachers meeting requirements of the new 2019 educational program

The goal of improving and developing integrated teaching skills for junior high school teachers is to help teachers update and modernize professional pedagogy, build self-learning and self-development skills. Training is conducted to ensure that the teaching staff understand the basic spirit and the principle of building new programs, new teaching plans and master the changes compared to the current program. At the same time, teachers should be able to develop their own self-learning skills so that they can improve their qualifications and meet new requirements [3].

At present, junior high school teachers are varied in terms of professional levels and psychological characteristics. They also have uneven integrated teaching skills. Therefore, in addition to updating the new knowledge and skills for all teachers, we need to identify specific goals in terms of seniority, level of training and actual results of teaching. Nevertheless, it must ensure the principle of deriving from the needs of teachers and appropriate characteristics (teacher classification).

For teachers of mountainous and ethnic minority areas, the objective of training is to achieve more specific objectives in accordance with the specific characteristics of ethnic minority education, the specific characteristics of teachers and students of ethnic minority schools.

Determining the training objectives to develop integrated teaching competence at first needs to conduct the survey and evaluation on teachers according to the requirements and criteria of the junior high school teachers' job standards, ensuring the scientific process.

The goal of training is to ensure integrated teaching skills of teachers. They should be enhanced to meet standardization needs and the requirements of secondary school teachers' job standard and the trend of secondary education reform.

4.3. Building training content to develop integrated teaching skills for junior high school teachers meeting requirements of the new 2019 educational program

The content of the training must be consistent to meet the defined development objectives. This means that the development content is determined on the basis of the current status of training and actual capacity of teachers, the skills which are required to meet the secondary education reform requirements, the modern trend in new functions and tasks of the teacher, the knowledge and skills through survey and assessment that have not met the current standards of secondary school teachers, the knowledge and skills needed to meet the demand and specific characteristic of teacher, the knowledge and skills needed but have not been in the recent development programs [5].

From the theoretical basis and results of survey and assessment, it is possible to identify the integrated teaching skills that need to be developed for secondary school teachers in the northern mountainous region as follows:

a) integrated theme (or content) selection skills;

b) skills in designing teaching plans in the direction of integration;

c) skills in selecting and using teaching methods in the direction of integration;

d) skills to conduct integrated teaching in class;

e) integrated teaching assessment skills.

Development content must be effective in creating fundamental changes in secondary schools, especially in content and teaching methods.

Content of training to develop integrated teaching skills for teachers should be specific and practical. In the training classes, teachers should be asked and discuss more professionally. The development of pedagogical methods and skills should be associated with the teacher's professional knowledge. Training courses should provide opportunities for learners to express their perceptions of the teaching process and guide them to understand the theoretical issues involved.

Some training contents to develop integrated teaching skills need to have suitable itinerary and gradually become mandatory development contents in order to equip teachers with tools to improve their own abilities.

The content of training to develop integrated teaching skills must be classified according to individual characteristics (professional level, age, teaching capacity, enjoyment, demand, psychology).

4.4. Determining the mode of training to develop integrated teaching skills for junior high school teachers

Recently we have mainly focused on developing skills for teachers and self-study. Participation in the skill development training has not been paid enough attention to. In order to innovate the method of skill development, the creative role of teachers in the development process should be strengthened by facilitating individual self-study, discussion in the professional groups and colleagues, thereby they can actively grasp knowledge and have self-examination

and evaluation skills for their development results.

The training to develop integrated teaching skills for teachers is usually organized in the following ways:

a) long-term or short-term intensive training at a training campus. Standardized training is usually organized by centralized methods. For a long time, regular training and textbook-change training in Vietnam also considers centralization as the primary mode.

b) on-site training, that is, training for teachers right at the school they are teaching. For secondary school teachers in the northern mountainous region with broad geographical distribution, difficulties in concentrating, the combination of training forms need to be flexible and suitable for real life, which is mainly on-site training, especially in the areas of basic knowledge and professional knowledge. Professional competence and pedagogical skills must be centralized, but concentrated in a narrow area (school, cluster of schools in the local districts, communes).

4. Suggestions with management levels

Continuing to compile and improve teacher training materials, reference materials should be provided adequately and timely for the local authorities and in accordance with the practice. In the teacher training plan, attention should be paid to the integrated teaching skills training program for teachers:

a) collaborating with relevant ministries and agencies to increase funding, material facilities and resources for teacher training;

b) it is necessary to promptly have a strategy and plan for training and upgrading secondary school teachers. Raising awareness of managers and teachers about the role and importance of training activities to develop integrated teaching skills for teachers;

c) organizing seminars, exchange of management experiences and professional training; training integrating teaching skills and innovating teaching methods for teachers;

d) instructing schools to implement the principles in management and activities of the teachers training process.

Bibliography

1. Nguyen Van Cuong, Bernd Meier (2015), Modern teaching theory, Hanoi Education Publishing House.
2. Ho Ngoc Dai, Educational Technology - Volume 1,2 Education Publisher, 2014.
3. Tran Cong Phong, Nguyen Thi Hong Van, Trends in the development of the GDPT program in the world, Vietnam Education Publishing House, 2016.
4. Ha Nhat Thang, Tran Huu Hoan, Trends in Educational Development, Publisher of Pedagogy University, 2013.
5. Do Huong Tra (ed.) (2015), Integrated teaching capacity development for pupils Vol. 1, University of Education.
6. Le Dinh Trung- Phan Thi Thanh Hoi (2016), Teaching oriented towards the formation and development of learner capacity in high school, Publisher of Pedagogic University, Hanoi.

© *Le T. L.*, 2018.