

## The Development of the Content of Primary Education in Ukraine during the Period of Revival of the National School (1991-2001)

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**Abstract.** In the article tendencies of development of the content of primary education in Ukraine during the revival of national schools in 1991-2001 are revealed on the basis of analysis of legislative and normative documents. Unity of studies, education and development; national orientation; variability; differentiation; humanization; liberalization; integration are basic principles of selection and structuring in the content of primary education.

**Keywords:** *content of primary education, principles of selection and structuring of educational content, State Standard of Primary Education, curriculum, programs, textbooks, Ukraine.*

**Introduction.** The revision and renovation of the education's content is primordial and scale pedagogical problems that especially had become pointed during the period of social and political and socio-economic changes. The end of XX-beginning of XXI century in history of Ukraine is one of them; it has been marked by the nationally-state revival and formation of new political, economic and social systems that had a significant impact on the education's development. The teachers directed close attention at the primary school's reformation as the base of educational degree that perceives and inculcates new ideas in practice more active than others. The study of this historic and pedagogical experience, in particular new approaches to a selection and structuring of the primary education's content of revival of Ukrainian national school, will allow not only to save the continuity in the development of pedagogical science but also comprehend modern transformations in the first link of the school.

**A short review of publications on the theme.** A historiographical analysis has showed that the problem of the content of education as one of the main and most debatable has always been in sight of the researches. Various aspects of development of the content of primary education in selected chronological limits are reflected in labors of the Ukrainian scientists: L. D. Berezivska, N. M. Bibik, M. S. Vashulenko, Ya. P. Kodliuk, O. Ya. Savchenko, etc.

**The purpose** of the scientific research is to highlight the peculiarities of the development of content of primary education, in particular its selection and structuring, in Ukraine during the period of revival of the national school in 1991-2001.

**Exposition of basic material of research.** 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>d</sup> and the 1<sup>st</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> 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 [11; 12]. 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 [10, p. 4]. Democratization in education caused the emergence of variable curriculums for different subjects and courses in primary school, the creation of the first alternative textbooks on literacy and reading [8, p. 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 [10, p. 10-11; 3, 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.) [10, p. 2-3; 3, 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 % [3, 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 [14, 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.Ya. 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" [14, 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.

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 principles in the selection and structuring of the content of primary education: national orientation, variability, humanitarization, differentiation and integration.

The next stage in development of the content of primary education is associated with the acceptance in 1996 the new Law of Ukraine "On Education" which started the development of State Standard of General Education [7]. In the same year Ministry of Education of Ukraine confirmed the national tendency of the Concept of state standard of secondary education. The essence and structure was defined [9].

The theories of the content of primary education offered by O. Ya. Savchenko were scientific background for the development of the State Standard of Primary Education:

- science, productive technologies, study of a region, study of human nature, pedagogical and psychological knowledge were the sources of the State Standard's formation;

- content of primary education was multicomponent (system of knowledge, system of ways of activity, experience of individual creativity, experience of attitude to the world);

- orientation on common and versatile development of children and valuable mastering of all the components of educational activity were priorities of its assortment;

- content of every school subject must be consisted of two parts – invariant that is looked over comparatively rarely and variant that must be renovated systematically [14, p. 6, 8].

Mentioned concept "accumulated the leading ideas of general theory of the content of school education and results of psychological researches of junior pupils' age peculiarities" [8, p. 102].

Project of the State Standard of Primary Education was prepared by researches of laboratory of studies and education of junior pupils of the Institute of Pedagogic in Ukraine; it was presented to pedagogical community in 1997. Its discussion took place on various levels of scientific and practice conferences, meetings, scientific-methodical commissions, on pages of professional publications.

However, afterwards the prosecution of Standard has been suspended because of preparation of the Law of Ukraine "On General Secondary Education". After its acceptance (1999) the new stage in development of state standards began; fundamental positions that required significant changes to the acceptance of the conception of standard appeared [15, p. 12]. Let us note that according to the Law of Ukraine "On General Secondary Education" the selection and mastering of education's content had to be based on common mankind values and principles of science, multiculturalness, society character of education, system, unity of study and education, principles of

humanity, democracy, civil consciousness [6, p. 1]. Also standard's functions, structure, requirements and responsibility were revealed in the document on legislative level [6, p. 7-8].

During 1999-2000 the State Standard of Primary General Education was completed considering suggestions and remarks of regional institutes of postgraduate education and institutes of improvement of teachers, separate collectives of different types of schools and teachers, researchers of laboratory of studies and education of junior pupils of Institute of Pedagogic in Ukraine. Afterwards this document was approved by resolution of The Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine and it was inculcated to the elementary school level in 2001/2002. It is important that the Standard was developed in accordance with possibilities of primary pupils; directed to their all-round development and education; forming their speech, reading, calculable abilities and skills, wish and ability to study [4, p. 28]. New components – experience of creative activity and emotionally-valued attitude toward the surrounding world were added to the traditional knowledge, abilities and skills; it has become the essential feature of the content of primary education that was fixed by Standard [2, p. 4]. Continuity, availability and scientific character, potential possibilities for intercommunicational study, humanization of the educational process were considered during selection of the content of primary education [4, p. 28].

The Base curriculum of primary school was fundamental component of the Standard; it contained invariant and variant components of the content of primary education. The invariant component was formed at state level and became obligatory for all secondary schools. This content was realized through 6 educational industries (Languages and Literature, Mathematics, Health and Physical Education, Technologies, Man and Environment and Art); they were reflected in curricula and textbooks through separate subjects and integrated courses. The variant component of the Base curriculum was formed independently by educational establishment considering its features and individual educational necessities of pupils. The Ministry of Education of Ukraine developed the curriculums for secondary schools according to the Base curriculum that determined general principles of construction of primary education [4, p. 28].

Standardization of primary education in conditions of variability of the educational system allowed providing unitary educational space in the country; to define the obligatory and sufficient levels of general preparation of junior pupils that studied in different types of educational establishments; to step back from subjectcentrism and present education's content integrally.

We should emphasize on an important role of leading Ukrainian scientists of primary education, researches of laboratory of studies and education of junior pupils of Institute of Pedagogic of Ukraine in development of the State Standard of Primary General Education, creation of curriculums and textbooks that met requirements of the Standard: N. M. Bibik, M. S. Vashulenko, N. S. Koval, L. M. Kochina, V. O. Martynenko, O. Yu. Prushchepa, O. Ya. Savchenko, V. P. Tymenko, O. N. Horoshkovcka, etc.

The appearance of large amount of variant programs and textbooks became the tendency in development of

content of primary education in the second half of 90<sup>th</sup> of XX century along with standardization. For example, in 1998/1999 school year the list of textbooks and teaching aids for schools with the Ukrainian language of teaching was almost 100 items [8, p. 105-106]. In general, in our opinion, it became a positive phenomenon, in fact there was a deviation from communality in the education's content, from domination of the unitary methodical system. Except scientist, the teachers of pedagogical educational establishments, teachers of schools, specialists were attached to the forming of the content of primary education. At the same time there were people who had an abstract idea about the content of primary education. The decline of quantity of examination and control after educational literature's edition led to creation of educational literature for junior pupils written by unprofessional authors [13, p. 2]. Therefore, problems of upgrading of curriculums and literature, creation of mechanism of their protection against subjectivism, unreliable information, overload complicated or trifling material were especially meaningful in the outlined time.

To improve the quality of educational editions, bringing new generation of talented authors into the process of textbooks' creation the Ministry of Education of Ukraine introduced approbation of trial and experimental textbooks in the system of general secondary education. In 1996/1997 school year 78 items of educational literature were approved; 7 of them were for primary schools; 88 educational textbooks' items were experimental, they were intended for the study of subjects with state component [5, p. 8].

Let us emphasize that integrated textbooks became the new phenomenon in national textbooks' publishing. For example, the content of Reading and Writing Studies, Mathematics and Nature Study was integrated in textbook "Horishok" (M. S. Vashulenko, N. M. Bibik, L. P. Kochina). Authors of this textbook prepared a notebook with the printed base (in two parts) and methodical manual for teachers: they created a training methodical complex that provided more effective studying of the new integrated course [8, p. 105].

As we can observe, during the second half of 1990s – early 2000s scientists and practical workers in industry of primary education focused their attention on development of the State Standard and its components. Appearance of numerous variant curriculums and textbooks; creation of the first integrated educational books for junior pupils became characteristic tendency of this period.

**Conclusion.** In summary we should note that the revival of Ukrainian national school in 1990 at the beginning of 2000s stipulated cardinal changes in development of primary education, in particular in its semantic component. Having analysed legislative and normative documents that determined content of primary education we came to conclusion that basic principles of its selection and structuring were unity of studies, education and development; national orientation, differentiation, humanizing, liberalization, integration. Standardization of the content of primary education; selection of state and school components in curriculums' structure; introduction of new educational subjects ("Ethnology", "Native Land", "Choreography") into the primary education course; introduction of integrated courses ("Music and motion", "Artistic labour",

"Man and Environment") led to separation from strong subjectcentrism; strengthening linguistic, aesthetic and social science components in the content of primary education; creation of various curriculums and textbooks; appearance of textbooks of new type (bi-level, alternative, integrated); satiation of content of educational subjects by Ukrainian base were absolute achievements and innovations of the investigated period. At the same time variability of education, worsening of quantity of examination and control after editions of curriculums and educational literature led to decline of their quantity which refer to the negative tendencies of the outlined period. We should

emphasize on important role of researches of laboratory of studies and education of junior pupils of Institute of Pedagogic of APN in modernization of curricula of primary education.

In 2001 general secondary education, in particular its initial link, moved to new curriculums and structure of studies. Introduction of the State Standard of Primary General Education began at schools on the first level. Consequently it became the beginning of new period in development of content of primary education. Its analysis will appear in our further publications.

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#### Развитие содержания начального образования в Украине в период возрождения национальной школы (1991-2001)

**Т. Л. Гавриленко**

**Аннотация.** В статье на основе анализа законодательных и нормативных документов выявлены тенденции развития содержания начального образования в Украине в период возрождения национальной школы в 1991-2001 годах. Акцентировано, что основными принципами отбора и структурирования содержания образования в начальной школе стали единство обучения, воспитания и развития; национальная направленность; вариативность; дифференциация; гуманизация; гуманитаризация; интеграция.

**Ключевые слова:** содержание начального образования, принципы отбора и структурирования содержания образования, Государственный стандарт общего начального образования, учебные планы, программы, учебники, Украина.