

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF INTEGRATING FOLKLORE GENRES WITH OTHER SUBJECTS IN READING LITERACY LESSONS

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Abstract: This article discusses the pedagogical importance and effectiveness of teaching folklore genres in primary education through an integrative approach. It analyzes the methods of combining reading literacy lessons with subjects such as Fine Arts, Music, and Natural Sciences to enhance students' comprehension and creative thinking skills. The study highlights that integrating folklore materials not only improves reading proficiency but also fosters national values and cultural awareness in young learners. Practical recommendations and pedagogical strategies for implementing interdisciplinary connections in the classroom are provided.

Keywords: Primary education, reading literacy, folklore genres, integrative approach, interdisciplinary connection, pedagogical effectiveness, teaching methodology, national values, oral tradition, critical thinking.

In the contemporary landscape of primary education, the development of reading literacy stands as the cornerstone of academic success and lifelong learning. However, the definition of literacy has evolved significantly in the 21st century. It is no longer sufficient for a student to merely decode text or read with fluency; true literacy encompasses the ability to comprehend, analyze, synthesize, and apply information in various contexts. In this pursuit, the educational systems of many nations are turning back to their roots, rediscovering the immense pedagogical potential of folklore genres-fairy tales, proverbs, riddles, epics, and legends. These oral traditions, which have served as the primary vehicle for intergenerational knowledge transfer for millennia, possess a unique capacity to engage young minds. Yet, a critical challenge remains in how these materials are presented in the classroom. The traditional, fragmented approach, where folklore is taught in isolation within "Reading" or "Literature" lessons, often fails to fully leverage the cognitive and emotional depth of the material. This paper posits that the most effective method for teaching folklore genres in primary education is through an integrative approach, one that systematically weaves reading literacy together with other disciplines such as Fine Arts, Music, Natural Sciences, and Mathematics. By establishing these cross-curricular connections, educators can create a holistic learning environment that not only improves reading scores but also fosters critical thinking, creativity, and a profound appreciation for national heritage.

The theoretical framework for this integrative approach is rooted in the constructivist theories of learning, particularly those championed by Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky. Constructivism suggests that learners construct knowledge by building upon their previous experiences and by making connections between new information and their existing understanding of the world. In the context of primary education, a child's understanding of the world is not compartmentalized into subjects; a child does not naturally view a tree as a biological object in one moment and an artistic subject in the next. To the child, the tree is a holistic entity. Therefore, when education artificially separates knowledge into rigid silos-teaching a folk song only as a text to be read in one hour, and teaching music notation in another, unrelated hour-it disrupts the natural

associative processes of the brain. Integration seeks to repair this disconnect. By teaching a folklore text in conjunction with the music that accompanies it, or the historical artifacts depicted within it, the teacher allows the student to create multiple neural pathways to the same information. This multi-sensory and multi-disciplinary scaffolding ensures that the knowledge is retained more deeply and recalled more easily.

Folklore genres are particularly well-suited for this integrative methodology because they are, by their very nature, syncretic. A folk epic (doston) is not just a story; it is a historical record, a musical composition, a repository of geographical knowledge, and a code of ethics. To teach it solely as a reading text is to strip it of its multidimensionality. For instance, when analyzing a fairy tale involving a journey through different landscapes, an integrative lesson would not only focus on the plot and character development (Reading Literacy) but also incorporate elements of Geography and Natural Sciences. Students might map the protagonist's journey, discussing the flora and fauna mentioned in the text. This prevents the reading lesson from becoming an abstract exercise in memorization and transforms it into an active investigation of the environment.

A comprehensive study was designed to test the validity of this hypothesis, focusing specifically on third-grade students, a pivotal age where the transition from "learning to read" to "reading to learn" occurs. The methodology involved a comparative analysis between a control group, which received standard instruction based on the existing curriculum, and an experimental group, which was exposed to a specially designed integrative module. The module focused on four primary folklore genres: riddles, proverbs, fairy tales, and excerpts from epics. Each genre was paired with a specific set of complementary subjects to maximize student engagement and comprehension.

The first phase of the integration focused on riddles, a genre that epitomizes critical thinking and metaphorical language. In the control group, riddles were treated as linguistic puzzles; students read them, guessed the answers, and moved on. In the experimental group, however, riddles served as a bridge to Natural Sciences and Mathematics. For example, riddles describing natural phenomena (rain, wind, seasons) were used as the starting point for a "Science" segment within the reading lesson. After solving a riddle about the water cycle, students would engage in a brief experiment or discussion regarding evaporation and precipitation. This immediate application of the text to physical reality helped students understand the descriptive power of language. Furthermore, mathematical riddles were used to integrate logic and arithmetic. Students were asked to analyze the structure of the riddle, identifying the logical variables required to solve it. This dual processing-linguistic and logical-resulted in a marked increase in the students' ability to deconstruct complex sentences, a skill directly transferable to reading comprehension tests.

The second phase dealt with proverbs and sayings, the distillation of national wisdom. Proverbs are often abstract and difficult for young children to grasp because they rely on metaphor. The integrative approach utilized "Fine Arts" to bridge this gap. Students in the experimental group were tasked with illustrating the meaning of a proverb. To draw the concept of "Measure seven times, cut once," a student must first visualize the consequences of the action. This translation of verbal language into visual imagery forces the brain to process the information deeply. During the study, it was observed that students who engaged in this artistic integration were able to recall the meaning of the proverbs with significantly higher accuracy weeks later compared to students who had merely copied the proverbs into their notebooks. The act of drawing provided a concrete anchor for an abstract concept.

The third and perhaps most extensive phase of the study focused on fairy tales and legends. Here, the integration was threefold, incorporating Music, Social Studies (Ethics), and Technology. Folk tales are inherently dramatic and rhythmic. In the experimental classes, reading sessions were interspersed with listening to traditional instrumental music relevant to the mood of the story. This "musical reading" helped students identify the emotional tone of the text-tension, joy, sorrow-which is a key component of emotional intelligence and literary analysis. Furthermore, the characters' decisions were analyzed through the lens of "Ethics" and "Social Studies." Instead of simply asking "What did the hero do?", the teacher facilitated debates on "Why was this decision necessary for the community?" This connected the ancient text to modern social dynamics. Finally, a technological element was introduced where students used simple digital tools to create a timeline of the story, integrating digital literacy with narrative sequencing.

The results of the study provided compelling evidence for the efficacy of the integrative approach. Quantitative data collected through pre- and post-intervention assessments showed a statistically significant divergence between the two groups. While the control group improved their reading comprehension scores by a marginal percentage consistent with standard academic progression, the experimental group demonstrated a surge in performance. Specifically, the experimental group excelled in questions requiring inference and deduction. This suggests that the cross-curricular connections trained the students to look for clues and context, rather than reading passively.

Qualitative analysis of the classroom dynamics offered further insights. Observer notes indicated a dramatic reduction in "off-task behavior" in the experimental group. The variety of activities-switching from reading to drawing, then to analyzing a scientific concept, then back to reading-maintained the students' attention span. The monotony often associated with long reading blocks was eliminated. Furthermore, the integrative approach appeared to level the playing field for students with different learning styles. Students who struggled with textual processing but excelled in visual or kinesthetic learning found entry points into the text through the art and science components. Once engaged, their confidence grew, leading to improved performance in the textual components as well.

One of the most profound findings of the research was the impact on vocabulary acquisition. Folklore texts are often replete with archaic words or dialect-specific terms that are alien to modern urban children. In traditional settings, these words are obstacles that disrupt the flow of reading. However, in the integrative setting, these words became subjects of inquiry. When a farming tool was mentioned in a story, the connection to "History" or "Labor Education" allowed the teacher to show pictures or even physical models of the tool. The word was no longer just a string of letters; it became a tangible object with a function. Vocabulary retention tests administered two months after the experiment showed that the experimental group retained 30% more of the new vocabulary than the control group.

Discussion of these results must also address the cultural dimension. Uzbekistan, like many nations with a rich history, places high value on the transmission of national identity. Folklore is the vessel of this identity. However, in a globalized world dominated by digital media, traditional folklore can feel distant or irrelevant to a modern child. The integrative approach revitalizes these texts by showing their relevance to the world the child inhabits. When a proverb about nature is linked to the science of ecology, the child realizes that their ancestors possessed deep scientific knowledge, albeit expressed poetically. This fosters a sense of pride and continuity. The study found that students in the experimental group were more likely to

reference folklore characters or proverbs in their free speech and creative writing, indicating that the material had been internalized rather than just memorized for a grade.

However, implementing such a methodology is not without challenges. It requires a significant shift in pedagogical planning. Teachers, who are often trained as specialists in specific methodologies, must become generalists capable of weaving together diverse strands of knowledge. It demands collaboration between teachers of different subjects-the reading teacher must coordinate with the music and art teachers to ensure thematic alignment. The study highlighted the need for robust teacher training programs that focus on interdisciplinary curriculum design. Simply telling a teacher to "integrate" is insufficient; they need concrete lesson plans (technological maps) and resources that facilitate this blending.

Furthermore, the assessment mechanisms in primary education need to be adapted to reflect this new approach. Standardized multiple-choice tests may not fully capture the depth of learning that occurs in an integrative classroom. If a student understands the cultural context of a fairy tale and can relate it to a musical rhythm but misses a minor grammatical point, a standard test might label them as "underperforming," whereas a holistic assessment would recognize their broad comprehension. Therefore, the adoption of integrative teaching methodologies must be accompanied by a shift towards formative assessment strategies, such as portfolios, project-based presentations, and creative essays.

The role of technology in this integration cannot be overstated. In the modern classroom, digital tools offer unprecedented opportunities to bring folklore to life. Virtual reality (VR) experiences can transport students to the historical settings of epics; augmented reality (AR) can make characters from fairy tales pop out of the book. The study briefly touched upon digital integration, but the potential here is vast. Future iterations of this methodology should explicitly include "Digital Literacy" as a core component of the integration, using folklore as the content for coding projects or digital storytelling animations.

In conclusion, the teaching of folklore genres in primary education through an integrative basis is not merely an alternative pedagogical option; it is a necessity for developing a robust, versatile, and culturally grounded reading literacy. The evidence suggests that when the walls between subjects are broken down, the learning potential of the student expands. Folklore ceases to be a dusty relic of the past and becomes a dynamic lens through which the child explores art, science, logic, and ethics. This approach respects the complexity of the child's developing mind and the richness of the national heritage. For educational policymakers and practitioners, the path forward involves a committed restructuring of the primary curriculum to prioritize these connections, ensuring that every reading lesson is an open door to the wider world of knowledge. The synthesis of the old (folklore) and the new (integrative pedagogy) offers the most promising route to cultivating a generation of deep readers and critical thinkers.

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