

THE THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE INTEGRATION OF THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS

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ABSTRACT

This article is devoted to analyzing the theoretical foundations and practical significance of integrating the educational process. The main objective of the study is to identify the opportunities for developing the professional competence of future technology education teachers through the integration of general professional and specialized subjects. The article provides a scientific and theoretical justification of the essence and meaning of the concept of integration, the stages of its implementation, and its interrelation with the competence-based approach. Methodologically, the study relies on theoretical analysis and comparative approaches, examining the perspectives of various pedagogical schools as well as the views of foreign and local scholars. On this basis, the inter-subject, intra-subject, and interpersonal levels of integration were identified, and their role in professional education was revealed. The results indicate that an integrated approach enables students to combine theoretical knowledge with practice, fosters creativity and critical thinking, and helps develop collaboration and communicative skills. According to the conclusions of the study, an educational process organized on the basis of integration not only develops professional knowledge and skills but also serves as an important factor in shaping students into specialists who are adaptable to the modern labor market and possess innovative thinking. The practical significance of this approach lies in its potential as an effective mechanism for improving the quality of education in pedagogical higher education institutions, modernizing curricula, and fostering technical and technological competencies among future teachers.

Keywords: Professional competence, pedagogical integration, integrative approach, innovative technology, interdisciplinary connection, technical and technological competence, quality of education.

INTRODUCTION

The implementation of subject integration in the development of professional competence among future specialists is widely recognized as an effective pedagogical strategy. Integration requires not only the logical interdependence of subject topics but also the systematic establishment of interdisciplinary connections that reflect the holistic nature of professional activity. In this sense, technological education plays a dual role: its aim is not limited to ensuring the acquisition of professional qualifications but also extends to preparing students for the successful resolution of diverse socio-professional situations. Such preparation demands that students are capable of applying theoretical knowledge in practice, adapting to rapidly changing labor market requirements, and demonstrating creativity and problem-solving abilities in real-life contexts.

Within the framework of competence-based education, numerous studies have been conducted to analyze the relationship between competence and the content of education. These studies highlight that competence cannot be equated merely with the possession of knowledge or

technical skills; rather, it is an integrative quality that encompasses motivation, values, and the readiness to perform professional tasks at a high standard. The distinction between a competent specialist and a merely qualified one lies in the ability of the former to mobilize and apply their knowledge, skills, and abilities effectively in practice, while also demonstrating flexibility, independence, and creativity.

Competence, therefore, is not only a set of cognitive and practical attributes but also a reflection of an individual's internal motivation and value orientations that drive professional excellence. It involves the acquisition and integration of professional skills, ethical values, and the ability to apply them in complex and unpredictable professional environments. From this perspective, subject integration becomes a critical pedagogical mechanism for forming holistic competencies, as it creates meaningful links across disciplines, promotes the synthesis of theoretical and practical knowledge, and supports the development of transferable skills.

Consequently, the study of subject integration in technological education is of particular importance. It provides a foundation for preparing future teachers and specialists who are not only knowledgeable in their field but also capable of navigating interdisciplinary contexts, responding to societal needs, and contributing to innovation. This study seeks to investigate the theoretical foundations and pedagogical potential of subject integration, emphasizing its role in developing professional competence as a key requirement of modern education systems.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The concept of pedagogical integration has been widely discussed by both international and local scholars, yet their perspectives differ in terms of theoretical orientation, methodological approaches, and practical application.

For instance, V.S. Bezrukova (1994) defines integration as a type of scientific synthesis within pedagogical theory and practice. According to her, integration has its own principles, forms, and methods that allow the educational process to be organized as a holistic system. However, her focus remains primarily theoretical, offering limited elaboration on practical mechanisms of implementation.

In contrast, G. I. Kruglikov (2002) views integration as an applied methodological principle within the subject *Technology*. He argues that technology as a school subject synthesizes knowledge from mathematics, physics, chemistry, and biology, while simultaneously demonstrating their application in industry, energy, agriculture, and communication. Unlike Bezrukova, Kruglikov interprets integration as a pedagogical-didactic practice rather than a purely conceptual construct.

Yu. L. Khotuntsev (2005) emphasizes that it is methodologically inappropriate to separate the study of information and material technologies, as the creation of material goods through processing technologies is inherently linked to information transformation. His approach highlights the cognitive and technological unity of integration, aligning with modern understandings of interdisciplinary connections in education.

Among Uzbek scholars, O.A. Abduquddusov (2005) underscores that interdisciplinary integration is not only of didactic importance but can also be successfully implemented methodologically, provided that teachers follow a staged and systematic approach. D. N. Zokirova (2021) advances the discussion further by framing integration as a crucial mechanism for developing intellectual potential, creativity, entrepreneurship, and independent learning in

future vocational teachers. Her interpretation directly links integration with personal development and professional readiness, introducing a more innovative perspective into the discourse.

At the same time, previous research has largely addressed integration either from a general theoretical angle (e.g., Bezrukova, Markova) or within specific subject frameworks (e.g., Kruglikov, Khotuntsev). While these contributions have provided valuable insights into the psychological-pedagogical and didactic dimensions of integration, they often lack a comprehensive analysis of how these dimensions interconnect in practice.

Thus, the current body of literature demonstrates a significant research gap: the role of integration between general professional and specialized disciplines in the direct development of professional competence has not been sufficiently explored. Moreover, the question of how such integration can be systematically embedded into curricula and teaching technologies remains underdeveloped. Addressing this gap defines the relevance and scientific contribution of the present study.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Today, integration is regarded as one of the most important innovative movements in education. However, within the field of pedagogy, there is no universally accepted definition of the concept of integration.

V. S. Bezrukova defines pedagogical integration as a type of scientific integration within the framework of pedagogical theory and practice. Naturally, such integration has its own specific pedagogical principles, forms, and methods [2].

According to G.I.Kruglikov, the school subject *Technology* is considered an integrated educational field that synthesizes scientific knowledge acquired from courses in mathematics, physics, chemistry, and biology, and demonstrates their application in industry, energy, communications, agriculture, and other areas of human activity [4].

Yu.L.Khotuntsev emphasizes that it is not advisable to separate the study of information and material technologies, since, in his view, the creation of material goods through the use of material processing technologies is, as a rule, associated with the transformation of information—that is, with information technologies [8].

The studies of D.O.Khimmataliev highlight the specificity of the technological approach in the professional training and pedagogical activities of future teachers [7].

The scientific research of D.N.Zokirova demonstrates that addressing the issues of developing the intellectual potential of future vocational education teachers, as well as fostering research skills, creativity, entrepreneurship, and organizational abilities, is one of the urgent tasks of the present time. Zokirova's research also attempts to create scientific and methodological foundations for improving the general professional training of future engineer-pedagogues through the use of simulation model devices within the system of professional pedagogical education [7].

O.A.Abduquddusov argues that interdisciplinary integration is not only didactically significant but can also be successfully implemented methodologically. He suggests that teachers of

different academic subjects can achieve high effectiveness in their practice if they follow certain stages in the process of integration [1].

The theoretical arguments presented in this study suggest that the integration of general professional and specialized disciplines is one of the key factors in developing students' technical and technological competence. To substantiate this idea, an analysis was carried out on the content of curricula, the methods applied in classroom practice, and the observable outcomes of student activity.

The observations of higher education practices reveal several consistent patterns:

theoretical knowledge taught in general professional disciplines is often insufficiently linked to the content of specialized courses;

students' ability to apply knowledge in practice tends to develop most effectively in integrated courses, where theoretical and applied knowledge are combined;

when there is a lack of systematic connection between theory and practice, the effectiveness of professional preparation for future teachers decreases significantly.

As emphasized in the theoretical framework of the article, interdisciplinary integration provides students with a holistic understanding of professional activity and readiness for its implementation. Meanwhile, intradisciplinary integration ensures the identification of semantic and structural relationships between theoretical and applied aspects of a single subject. Through these processes, students acquire the skills of generalization, systematization, comparison, and the practical transfer of knowledge into new contexts.

The analysis further demonstrates that integrative courses do not merely enable the acquisition of interdisciplinary knowledge. They also foster creativity, independent thinking, and problem-solving competencies among students. As a result, students' technological literacy, critical thinking, and professional adaptability are observed to be stronger compared to those taught through traditional, non-integrated approaches.

Therefore, the practical evidence derived from the analysis aligns with the theoretical assumptions of this study: the integration of general professional and specialized disciplines should be considered an effective mechanism for improving the professional competence of future technology teachers.

RESULTS

A competent specialist must be able to go beyond the narrow boundaries of their profession and, at the same time, possess creative potential for self-development. Some scholars view personal and professional development as complementary processes: professional development involves the formation, growth, and integration of personal qualities, abilities, and professional competencies within professional activity. Most importantly, however, it entails a qualitative transformation of the individual's inner world, resulting in a fundamentally new structure, lifestyle, and creative self-realization in their profession.

In higher education institutions, the integration of general professional and specialized disciplines, along with the implementation of career-oriented education, plays an important role in the preparation of future specialists. The teaching of all subjects must be systematically coordinated, directed towards the unified goal of training flexible professionals who can adapt to the demands of the time. Enhancing the quality of education is one of the most urgent global challenges today. Its solution requires the modernization of educational content, the revision

of educational technologies, and a rethinking of the ultimate goals of education. In this context, it becomes necessary to strengthen students' professional competence, adaptability, and ability to apply their acquired knowledge in practice in line with employers' requirements.

The integration of disciplines is an effective method for developing the professional competence of future technology teachers, as it demands interdependence of subject topics and interdisciplinary connections. Through an integrative approach, the transfer of knowledge from one discipline to another enables mutual enrichment and development across subjects, which is its strongest feature. This approach involves implementing four main levels of integrative processes:

Interdisciplinary integration – the interconnection of fundamental ideas, principles, and content of various disciplines, ensuring a holistic understanding of professional activity and readiness to implement it;

Intradisciplinary integration – establishing semantic, structural, and technological connections between sections within a single subject, thereby revealing systemic relationships as well as the link between theory and practice;

Interpersonal integration – fostering reflexive readiness and professional thinking through the study of achievements and the formation of new personal experience.

In pedagogy, the integrative approach considers the educational process as a holistic system, leading to qualitatively new outcomes and the creation of a systematic, comprehensive form of education. Professional competence formation thus becomes one of the key functions in the training of future teachers. Every professional task, by its very nature, is interdisciplinary and integral, requiring systematic analysis and the construction of holistic models for its resolution. Therefore, today's teachers face the challenge of applying an integrated approach in their activity—an approach that ensures the growth of professional and personal competencies, manifests itself in integral modes of thinking, and combines theory with practice.

The concept of competence functions as an integral quality of the learner, shaped and reinforced by a set of personal attributes—knowledge, skills, practical experience, abilities, and value-semantic orientations—that ensure readiness for the profession. The essence of the integrative approach lies in organizing and implementing students' exploratory activity, fostering active and independent acquisition of knowledge, and mastering ways of applying it under conditions of disciplinary and interdisciplinary synthesis.

The implementation of an integrated approach in the educational process involves addressing the following tasks:

- fully revealing students' personal potential;
- creating conditions for self-discovery and self-realization;
- developing cooperation, communication, and the ability to build balanced interpersonal relations;
- fostering orientation towards teamwork and collective activity.

The main purpose of integrated courses is to ensure students' assimilation of interrelated scientific concepts. The choice of teaching methods and tools largely depends on the goals of instruction. Modern educational technology develops through two main directions:

1. The creation of innovative technologies that introduce qualitatively new ideas, elements, and educational concepts, which transform the forms, methods, and content of education;

2. The development of combinational, integrative technologies that generate new systems through the combination, modification, and interconnection of existing elements.

Thus, the formation of core educational competencies—through integration across various disciplines and subject areas—is possible only in cooperation. Integration is feasible under the following conditions:

1. The objects of study and research must correspond or be close in content;
2. Integrated disciplines must employ similar or related research methods;
3. Integrated disciplines must be based on common laws, general theoretical concepts, and principles;
4. Students' activities within integrated disciplines must involve common or similar methods.

DISCUSSION

At present, interdisciplinary integration is the most important factor in educational development, particularly in implementing the competence-based approach, which requires detailed analysis. In the process of integration, each element of the general professional and specialized disciplines retains a certain degree of autonomy. Therefore, regardless of the overall level of system mastery, individual disciplines must be assessed independently.

As integration develops, the scope and intensity of interaction between elements of general professional and specialized disciplines increase, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of preparing future technology teachers for professional activity. The integration of theoretical and practical knowledge across these disciplines establishes systemic interconnections that reflect their interdependence. The type of integration that arises determines the manifestation of relationships in actual professional activity.

In the course of our research, we identified the following main challenges in integrating general professional and specialized disciplines: insufficient content of technology education for the formation of technical and technological literacy applicable to real life; limited opportunities for developing critical thinking and creativity; lack of metadisciplinary competencies and interdisciplinary connections; and the fragmentation of subjects, with content that is weakly interrelated and inconsistently studied.

Technical and technological competence encompasses not only mastering specific technologies or techniques but also understanding their functioning, critically assessing and integrating new technologies into the learning process, and encouraging students to actively apply technological knowledge in real life. For this reason, a future technology teacher must possess not only deep theoretical knowledge but also highly developed practical skills, alongside the readiness for continuous self-improvement and professional development.

The methodology for developing technical and technological competence is based on the integrative approach and includes the following key elements: theoretical preparation, practical activity, project-based work, and reflection. Such an approach not only imparts necessary knowledge and skills but also contributes to the development of professional identity and independence in the learning process. Theoretical training helps students form and deepen their understanding of technology and engineering, their historical development, current state, and future prospects—providing a foundation for applying knowledge in practice.

The proposed methodology for the formation and development of technical and technological competence is multidimensional, aimed at the comprehensive development of future technology teachers. The integration of general professional and specialized disciplines in this process enables them to successfully address the challenges of modern education (see Figure 1) [6].

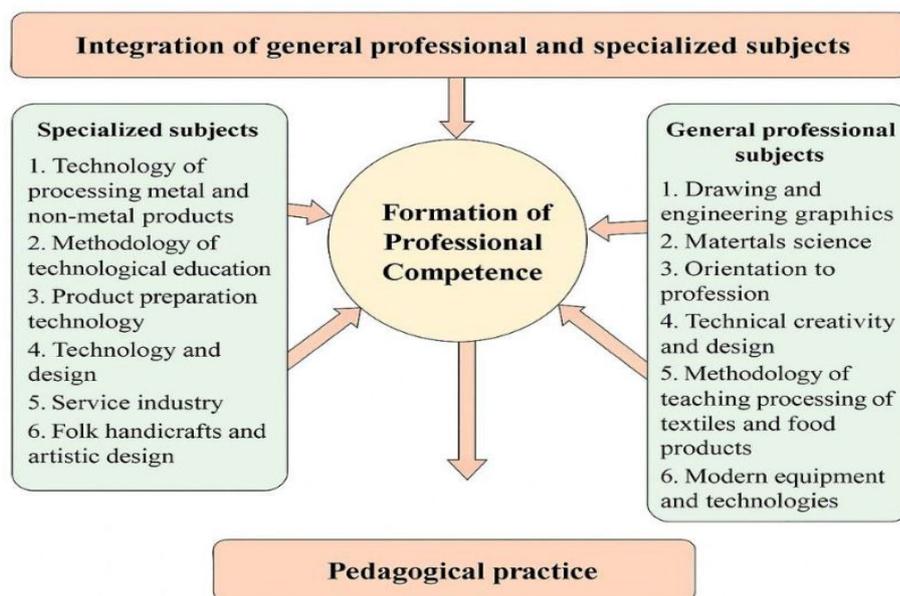


Figure 1. Integration of general professional and specialized subjects

Constructing the educational process on an integral basis encompasses significantly broader technological opportunities. Existing practices in implementing the integral approach are largely connected with the development of various integrated courses. The *Encyclopedia of Technological Education* identifies three levels of integration between academic subjects:

1. **First level** – the highest degree of holism, in which complete content and process integration occur within the framework of a newly created integrated subject.
2. **Second level** – the level of didactic synthesis, where each subject is preserved, and integration is carried out on the basis of one of them. In this case, the unifying factor is the common object of study.
3. **Third level** – the level of interdisciplinary interrelation, where the integrating factor is the common elements of the subject content.

The implementation of interdisciplinary integration facilitates the formation of educational and labor motivations, develops students' skills of generalization and comparison, and creates opportunities for intellectual activity. It also enables students to transition from one type of activity to another, achieve a higher level of knowledge and skills acquisition, and thereby directly influence the professional knowledge, practical experience, and essential personal qualities of future teachers, fostering professional interest and contributing to the learning process.

Integrated lessons make it possible to generalize and systematize material while ensuring compliance with the requirements of content integrity. In such lessons, students assimilate all possible ways of understanding the surrounding world, nature, society, and human beings through the analysis, synthesis, and systematization of knowledge, skills, and abilities across different disciplines [5].

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In conclusion, the combination of teaching forms implemented on the basis of the integration of general professional and specialized disciplines, as well as the application of integration at various levels and directions, contributes to the development of technical and technological competence in future teachers of technological education.

On the basis of this conclusion, we find it reasonable to propose the following:

In preparing for professional activity, it is advisable to incorporate the components of general professional and specialized discipline integration into the pedagogical–psychological dimension. This includes fostering students’ and teachers’ adaptability, professional interests, cognitive knowledge, thinking and perception, as well as communicative skills in interpersonal relations.

Within pedagogical higher education institutions, it is essential to organize special courses aimed at the formation and improvement of professional competencies at each stage (year of study) of students’ professional preparation. These courses should be designed as targeted programs based on the integration of general professional and specialized disciplines, in order to meet the requirements of contemporary education.

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