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Possibilities of University Teaching Enhancement - Integration of Methods and Approaches in Teaching Literature with Science and Social Studies²

Extended summary

The established standards and requirements for ensuring the quality of university teaching require improvement and modernization of the teaching process, as well as the application of innovative teaching methods to create conditions for raising the quality of working with students. Integration of the teaching content and application of an integrative approach represent a way of enhancing the quality of the teaching process. Integration of the teaching content and application of an integrative approach represent a way of enhancing the quality of the teaching process. The current situation, as well as legal regulations that clearly emphasize the importance of integrative teaching, inevitably entail the need to consider the improvement of university teaching, especially the work dealing with the education of future primary school teachers. Student perception of the teaching process is a very important source of feedback, opinions, and educational experiences, which can significantly contribute to improving the quality of teaching and learning conditions at higher education institutions (Jevremov et al., 2016). In the light of this knowledge, the importance of students' attitudes towards *integrative teaching* and its place in the system of university teaching must be noted, because in the near future the pre-service primary school teachers will have the opportunity to teach in accordance with the Law on the Fundamentals of the Education System (Official Gazette of RS, No. 88/17).

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The paper presents an example of the integration of the Literature Teaching Methodology and Science and Social Studies Teaching Methodology curriculum content. The integrative approach in teaching undoubtedly has its advantages, but the application of this didactic system requires great inventiveness and expertise. This system should contribute to a better understanding and gradual understanding of certain contents, and requires a quality teacher who is well acquainted with modern methodological trends and knows how to apply them in his/her teaching practice. In order to put the theoretical context of the development of this concept into practice, a practical demonstration of the integrative approach of the teaching contents of the above-mentioned subjects was carried out, followed by the research aimed at examining the attitudes of undergraduate students of primary education at the Faculty of Education (N=150) towards the integration of methodological approaches to teaching literature and science and social studies as opportunities for improving the quality of university education. A descriptive method was used in the research, while the data was collected using the survey technique and the application of the survey questionnaire. The instrument was composed of a five-point Likert-type scale and open-type questions. The obtained data were processed using the statistical package IBM SPSS Statistics 20, and in accordance with the researched subject, used method and instrument, appropriate statistical procedures (percentage, frequency, median) were applied.

The systemic training of the pre-service primary school teachers and the development of their interdisciplinary competencies through initial education and a continual good-quality professional development can be the reason for a more frequent application of integrative teaching in teaching practice, which would, in the long run, result in innovating teaching and improving its efficiency. The need for pedagogical faculties to provide the pre-service teachers with conditions for acquiring the necessary competencies for planning and implementing integrative teaching through quality university teaching is indicated by the results of this research, which indicate that students recognize the advantages of integrative teaching and understand its importance for their future professional work. The students' answers clearly show that they want to cooperate with professors and their colleagues in the preparation and implementation of integrative teaching and to participate in the design of integration and selection of the methodological content. Students believe that the implementation of the integrative approach in university teaching contributes to the quality of the acquired knowledge because it allows them to better understand the content which they adopt in the teaching process. The results of this research can be stimulating and significant for the researchers working at teacher training colleges and looking for methods that could be useful in training the pre-service teachers who will work in primary schools, and in the long run affect the improvement of the education system in Serbia. In addition, the results can be an incentive to conduct similar research on a larger sample. The results of this research can serve as a starting point for changing the syllabus and the way of working at pedagogical faculties that would contribute to a more intensive application of this teaching model and the study of its didactic-methodological elements. The future research that can be conducted in this area may provide new guidelines in the search for more efficient and productive learning strategies, which will ensure the improvement of the teaching process.

Keywords: higher education quality, integrative teaching, teaching process innovation, student-centered learning, teaching methodology.

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