

# INTEGRATING ARTS IN TEACHING ENGLISH IN THE MOLDOVAN SCHOOLS

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**Rezumat:** *Prezentul articol se focusează pe conceptul de integrare a artelor la lecțiile de limbă engleză. Se trece în vizor evoluția conceptului de integrare a artelor în predarea diferitor conținuturi și implementarea acestor lecții în secolul al 20-lea. Ca urmare, se propune o lecție care coagulează concepte curriculare moderne: (1) învățarea conținutului; (2) dezvoltarea abilităților; (3) integrarea artelor în predarea limbii engleze.*

**Cuvinte cheie:** *învățare integrată, abilitățile secolului al 20-lea, integrarea artelor, clasa a 7-a, carte poștală 3D.*

## Introduction

The biggest challenge in education is to develop skills and abilities at students that will help them integrate their learning in day-to-day life. This certain type of learning is a student-oriented and helps in developing integrated abilities. In the education field, the term "integrated learning" is explained in many different ways. M. Huber states that integrated learning means making connections within a major, between fields, between curriculum, co-curriculum, or between academic knowledge and practice (Huber 2005). Through integrated studies, a wide range of possibilities is opened to the students (integration brings together traditionally separate contents for a more authentic understanding of students). Veronica Boix Mansilla, cofounder of the Interdisciplinary Studies Project at Project Zero, explains "when students can bring together concepts, methods, or languages from two or more disciplines or established areas of expertise in order to explain a phenomenon, solve a problem, create a product, or raise a new question, they are demonstrating interdisciplinary understanding".

U. Laur-Ernst (1999) argues that learning should involve certain aspects of the learner's total being. Sharply opposed to traditional education with its dissected view of the learner's being, integrated learning involves the cognitive, emotional and psycho-motor facets of the student participating in the learning activity. This means that students learn to

involve, though not necessarily to the same extent, all facets of their beings in every action and situation that they encounter. N. Alexandrov and R. Ramirez-Velarde (2013) state that integrated learning is a process built on interactive learning in a social setting. The definition is based on the natural learning cycle described by David Kolb (2001). This cycle consists of four dynamic parts: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract hypothesis and active testing. The role of the facilitator in this process is to create a setting in which students can freely and naturally move, act to develop critical thinking, innovative actions and emancipatory will through interactions in social settings, as in the context of real life.

### **Integration from the diachronic perspective**

The concept of integration started to be reframed and implemented in the 90s. It was a renewed interest in making different disciplines work together. The ideas of integration are closely related to the ideals of progressive education at the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century. The emphasis of progressive educators on the child-centered curriculum and holistic learning promoted the idea of integration between curricular subjects. John Dewey, a prominent figure in the formation of the ideals of progressive education, regarded experience and aesthetic experience as the basis around which education should revolve (Dewey 1934). Arts education gained popularity as part of John Dewey's Progressive Education Theory<sup>10</sup>. The first publication that describes the interaction between the arts and other subjects taught in the American schools was Leon Winslow's *The Integrated School Art Program (1939)*. The role of arts education in schools was reduced after this publication due to the political leanings and financial well-being of the country.

Still, according to Liora Bresler's words<sup>11</sup>, during the 70s and 80s,

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<sup>10</sup>John Dewey (October 20, 1859 – June 1, 1952) was an American philosopher, psychologist, and educational reformer whose ideas have been influential in education and social reform. Dewey is one of the primary figures associated with the philosophy of pragmatism and is considered one of the fathers of functional psychology. A Review of General Psychology survey, published in 2002, ranked Dewey as the 93rd most cited psychologist of the 20th century. A well-known public intellectual, he was also a major voice of progressive education and liberalism Progressive Education Theory.

<sup>11</sup>Liora Bresler is a Professor at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. She is also the Hedda Anderson Chair in Lund University, Sweden (Visiting); a

there appeared two adherents of arts integration: Harry Broudy and Elliot Eisner. H. Broudy advocated for the arts integration that might strengthen students' imagination. He claimed that imagination is inseparable part of learning and should be cultivated in schools. In his work *Enlightened Cherishing* (1994), he recommended the integration of aesthetic education into all subject. H. Broudy added that the arts are important to varying types of cognition. He claimed that the arts are interactive and due to this, they bring a deeper understanding of the world; the arts move learning beyond what is written or read (Bresler 1995). Cassandra B. Whyte also contributed to arts integration in the curriculum. The linguist pointed out the importance of artistic experiences for students to inspire creative and independent thought processes (Whyte 1973). Up to the present days, Common Core<sup>12</sup> and its close adaptations are moderating the models of learning in schools. They believe that the arts approach and arts integration in every subject is to change the way of old education, making it more interesting and diverse.

### **Integrating arts in the 7th grade in the Moldovan schools**

In Moldova, integration is a rudimentary theory that the Ministry of Education, Science and Research is striving at implementing. The academic community is not very happy about it, but the recommendation should be taken into account. As a tentative integrated arts lesson, we have chosen Unit V. Lesson 1. Form 7. We have chosen pop-up card making as a product of the arts integration in 7<sup>th</sup> form. There are five stages that the

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Professor II at Stord/Haugesund University College, Norway; and an Honorary Professor in the Hong Kong Institute of Education. Other positions include distinguished visiting professorships at Stockholm University, Sweden, (2009-2011) and at the University of Haifa, Israel (1994/5). Her interdisciplinary work focuses on the arts and qualitative research methodology. In her various editorship roles in books and special issues of academic journals, she has sought to bring together intellectual communities across arts disciplines and cultures to address key areas, for example, early childhood, curriculum and cultural context

<sup>12</sup>The Common Core State Standards Initiative is an educational initiative from 2010 that details what K–12 students throughout the United States should know in English language arts and mathematics at the conclusion of each school grade. The initiative is sponsored by the National Governors Association (NGA) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and seeks to establish consistent educational standards across the states as well as ensure that students graduating from high school are prepared to enter credit-bearing courses at two- or four-year college programs or to enter the workforce.

pupils should pass through. Here the pupils are taught content and developed skills through drawing and hand-made creation.

### Objectives:

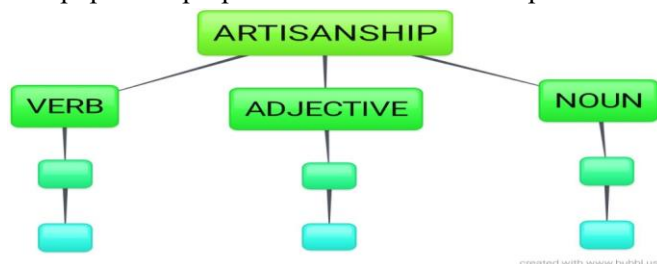
- to get acquainted and train the proposed vocabulary;
- to use the lexemes in sentences;
- to make up dialogues training the proposed vocabulary;
- to develop critical thinking and creativity through pop-up card making;
- to retell the text using the designed pop-up card;
- to evaluate the peers' pop-up cards by revising IF CONDITIONAL;
- to develop public speaking skills through the simulation of an interview using the *artisanship* vocabulary.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9yCcQMhzk-g>

### Stage I. Brainstorming the proposed topic

#### Let's make a spidergram together (7 minutes)

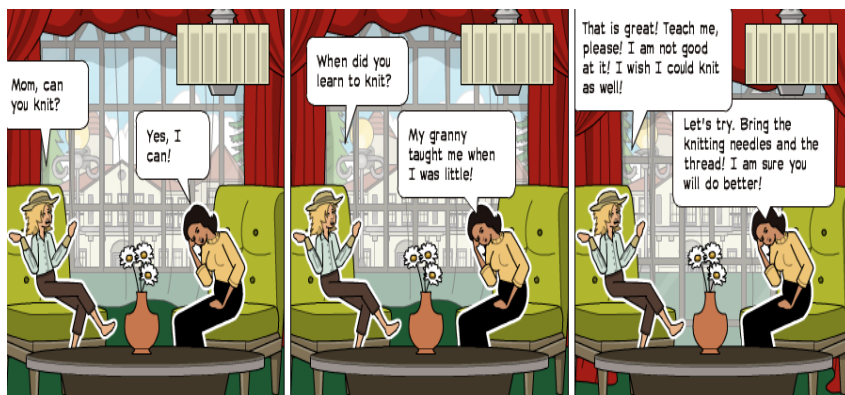
The pupils are proposed to brainstorm the topic.



### Stage II. Simulating a dialogue

The pupils have to use the directions and simulate the proposed dialogue.

They are allowed to use other lexemes that belong to the artisanship topic.



### Stage III. Reading the text and making pop-up cards (10 minutes)

The students are divided into 4 groups. The text from the 7<sup>th</sup> form textbook is divided into 4 parts. The students are asked to read the portion and to represent the content of the provided portion throughout a drawing. The drawings are to help the class to get the general idea of the whole text and facilitate the process of pop-up card creation

#### LEARNING THROUGH ART

Children's creative work has always been appreciated. School is the fundamental place where pupils develop skills in different artisanship domains.

Manual work is widely practised by people from an early age. Pupils learn to create art at Handicraft lessons. The teachers train them how to use various instruments such as crochet hooks, knitting needles, carving knives, needles, etc. These magic tools bring children lots of ideas when working with them. Making flower compositions and different appliqués is taught at Design lessons.

At Drawing lessons pupils learn to work with brushes, water colours and oil paints. At Photography

Club children learn to take pictures. Traditionally, every school holds creative work exhibitions at which pupils display their pieces of art, such as tapestries, drawings, paintings, different flower compositions, seed and other appliqués, sculptures, carvings and photos etc. These exhibitions help schools underline learning through art.

When guests see the variety of articles made by children they are surprised at their great skills. These articles attract the eye because they represent real wonders.

The best pieces of work are sent to the city/town exhibitions of children's creative works where lots of visitors come and admire them.

### Retelling using pop-up cards (10 minutes).

The teacher offers a **series of materials** for the pop-up cards creation. There are given some papers with the words that have to be a part of the pop-up card. The students are given **ten minutes** to make the pop-up card. Each page of the pop-up card should contain a **key word**.

The students retell the text using the made pop-up card. The first student is not evaluated. Then, the peer evaluation follows. Each student is given a **rubric and formulas** to be used to evaluate the retelling and the pop-up card. Moreover, the students have to use the structure **IF I had to make a pop-up card, I would use another color.** in the evaluation speech.

### Stage IV. Evaluating the pop-up cards.

CATEGORY	4	3	2	1
<b>Attractiveness</b>	The card is exceptionally attractive in terms of design, layout, and neatness.	The card is attractive in terms of design, layout and neatness.	The card is acceptably attractive though it may be a bit messy.	The card is distractingly messy or very poorly designed. It is not attractive.
<b>Title</b>	Title can be read from 6 cm. away and is quite creative.	Title can be read from 4 cm away and describes content well.	Title can be read from 4 cm away and describes the content well.	The title is too small and/or does not describe the content of the card well.
<b>Graphics -Clarity</b>	Graphics are all in focus and the content easily viewed and identified.	Most graphics are in focus and the content easily viewed and identified.	Most graphics are in focus and the content is easily viewed and identified.	Many graphics are not clear or are too small.
<b>Content - Accuracy</b>	At least 8 accurate facts are displayed on the poster.	5-6 accurate facts are displayed on the poster.	3-4 accurate facts are displayed on the poster.	Less than 3 accurate facts are displayed on the poster.
<b>Graphics - Originality</b>	Several of the graphics used on the card reflect an exceptional degree of student creativity in their creation and/or display.	One or two of the graphics used on the card reflect student creativity in their creation and/or display.	The graphics are made by the student, but are based on the designs or ideas of others.	No graphics made by the student are included.

### Formulas to facilitate the pupils' discourse production:

The card is attractive, neat and not messy. It is worth 4 points for attractiveness.

The title is... It is worth.... for title.

The content of the card is easily seen. It is worth ... for graphics clarity.

The card describes ..... facts. It is worth ....for content accuracy.

The card design is creative. It is worth ... for graphics originality.

### Stage V. Interview using the pop-up card (1 stands for the first speaker, 2 stands for the second speaker).

1.This is Balti News. We are today in school 17, speaking to **Ion** who is in the 7<sup>th</sup> form. He is the inventor of the pop-up cards. Would you like to tell when you made your first card?

2.I created the first card ...

1.Great ... What was the card about?

2.It was about ...

1.Have you ever exhibited this card anywhere?

2.I exhibited it last week in our museum.

1.What would you do, if you had the chance to teach this art to your colleagues?

2.If I had the chance, I would provide materials, show them how to perform this creative work.

## Conclusion

The notion of arts integration has appeared not so long ago, but it is highly used in TEFL methodology. There are a lot of advantages of integrating arts in teaching English. Arts integrated lessons improve concentration and memory, increase pupils' motivation and interest, stimulate higher level-thinking and encourage joyful and active learning. Arts bring a sense of community to a group, help pupils absorb the provided content and impel imagination. The lesson that we have refreshed suggests that when arts are integrated well they have a great impact on students' multifaceted development. We are sure that this type of lessons might make pupils achieve better results both in content and skills development. Integrated components from arts bring interest, joy, diversity into the English lessons, motivating the students and awakening their interest to study it. Through acting, singing, improvising and hand-made creation at English lessons, students find themselves in another world of studies. In this world, they feel happy, relaxed, and interested in learning as much as possible.

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