

INCORPORATION AND INTEGRATION OF CONTENTS AND METHODS OF HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION IN CURRICULA OF PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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***Abstract:** Contents and methods of human rights education are incorporated, integrated and focused most clearly in Ethics at the elementary school level and in civic education at the lower secondary school and upper secondary levels (high school); In addition, they are incorporated and integrated in the subjects through a number of connected topics (self, family, occupation, fauna and flora, homeland, country, Uncle Ho, State, political system) and STEM education among subjects or disciplines, in order to help pupils know and to a certain extent exercise children's rights and duties, first and foremost basic rights and duties close to them, such as the right to life, health and nurturing, learning, playing, recreation, protection, participation and development.*

***Keywords:** Incorporating, integrating, contents and methods of human rights education, primary, secondary and high school.*

The basic education program in general and textbooks in particular underwent a reform, under the Resolution No. 40/2000/QH10 on renovating the program of basic education effective from December 9, 2000 passed by the 10th National Assembly. The new basic education program was launched in 2002, however, it was not until 2006-2007

academic year that the curricula of primary and secondary schools were formalized, in accordance with the Ministry of Education and Training's Decision No. 16/2006/QD-BGDĐT on promulgating basic education programs on May 5, 2006.

Based on Resolution No. 88/2014/QH13 of the National Assembly on innovation of curricula and textbooks of

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basic education, and Education Law No. 43/2019/QH14 approved on June 14, 2019 together with the government's Decision 1309/QĐ –TTg on “Project to integrate human rights education into the national curricula” approved on September, 5, 2017, it is possible to assess how effectively the contents and methods of human rights education are incorporated and integrated in the curricula of primary and secondary schools as follows.

1. Achievements of the incorporation and integration of contents and methods of human rights education in curriculum of primary and secondary schools

The incorporation and integration of contents and methods of human rights education in national curricula involves “integrative teaching”. The term “integrative” does not only entail the incorporation but also involves the synthesis of knowledge. In educational sciences, the concept of "integrative teaching" is based on educational principles and methodologies which aim to create well-rounded individuals. Accordingly, teachers are in charge of organizing and instructing students to synthesize their prior knowledge and skills with a view to formulating and developing new knowledge and skills of a higher level. The incorporation and integration of contents and methods of human rights education in basic education program means teachers' organizing and

instructing students to mobilize their qualities and capacities in order to formulate, develop and uphold new qualities and capacities which enable them to understand, respect, and protect their own rights and responsibilities, and those of other people. Most importantly, they must be conscious of the rights and responsibilities of a student which include the right to life, the right to care, the right to education and aptitude development, the right to play and recreation, the right to participation, the right to development and the right to be protected.

a) Contents of human rights education in curricula of primary and secondary schools

First, in terms of incorporating and integrating contents of human rights education in the curriculum of primary schools:

Based on the Ministry of Education and Training's Decision No. 16/2006/QĐ-BGDĐT effective from May 5, 2006, the curriculum of primary schools include: Vietnamese (grade 1-5), Maths (grade 1-5), Ethics (grade 1-5), Natural and Social Studies (grade 1-3), Science (grade 4-5), History and Geography (grade 4-5), Music (grade 1-5), Visual Arts (grade 1-5), Crafts (grade 1-3), Engineering (grade 4-5), Physical Education (grade 1-5), School and class meetings (grade 1-5), Extra-curricular activities: 4 periods/month (grade 1-5).

Contents and methods of human rights education at primary level are best



At primary schools, pupils receive early human rights education.

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incorporated and integrated in Ethics. Besides, they can also be seen in other subjects through integrative themes (which are elaborated later in the part of overall assessment).

The syllabus of Ethics from grade 1 to grade 5 is designed to clarify students' rights and duties, which are closely associated with age-appropriate ethical standards, on different themes:

(i) The theme of self-discipline can be seen in such units as "I am in the first grade"; "Be clean and neat" and the like (ii) The theme of family relationship can be seen in such units as "My family", "Respect and get along with siblings" and so on (iii) The theme of manners at schools can be seen in the units of "Be respectful during flag salutation", "Attend classes fully and on time", "Stay in order during class hours", "Respect and obey

teachers" and "Me and friends" among others (iv) The theme of social responsibilities can be seen in units such as "Rules for pedestrians", "Say thanks and sorry", "Greetings and goodbyes", etc... (v) The theme of environmental protection is seen in units of "Protecting flowers and plants in public areas".

These behavioral standards are characterized with the blend of national and global standards and the mixture of both modern and traditional ones, which help build students' self-esteem and determination to achieve success, nurture their strong attachment to their own people, hometown and country, and encourage them to treasure and preserve the national identity while respecting other nations and valuing peace and shared development. Generally, human rights education is effectively

incorporated and integrated in Ethics subject, which might facilitate the inclusion of the feature in other subjects in primary education's curriculum such as Vietnamese, natural and social studies, history, geography, science, music and visual arts and so on.

Human rights education at primary schools is closely associated with core moral rights and accordance with their ages such as the right to life, the right to birth registration, the right to acquire a nationality, the right to live with parents, the right to keep in contact and reunite with their parents, the right to surrogacy and adoption, right to care, the right to education and aptitude development, the right to play and recreation, etc.

While at pre-school education, students have merely access to the right to life, at the primary education, students have a chance to learn about child rights in more detail: the right to be protected; the right to care, the right to education, the right to development and the right to participation on the basis of children's rights stated in the Children Law (2016).

Responsibilities: According to Articles 37 - 41 of the Law on Children 2016, at primary schools, children are taught to perform duties to themselves and their families, such as to respect and care about their grandparents and parents, to willingly help their parents, siblings and relatives as well as to be a responsible student, and a good citizen of the country.

Second, in terms of incorporating and integrating contents of human rights education in the curriculum of junior high schools:

Based on the Ministry of Education and Training's Decision No. 16/2006/QĐ-BGDĐT effective from May 5, 2006, curriculum of lower secondary schools include: Literature (Grade 6-9), Mathematics (Grade 6-9), Civil Education (Grade 6-9), Physics (Grade 6-9), Chemistry (Grade 8-9), Biology (Grade 6-9), History (Grade 6-9), Geography (Grade 6-9), Music (Grade 6-9), Visual Arts (grades 6-9), Computer Science (Grade 6-9), Physical education (Grade 6-9), Foreign languages (Grade 6-9), Elective subjects (Grade 6-9), School and class meetings (Grade 6-9), Extra-curricular activities: 4 periods/month (Grade 6-9), Career Orientation (Grade 9).

The content and methods of human rights education at the lower secondary level are best incorporated and integrated in civic education subject. Besides, they can also be seen in other subjects through certain integrative themes (which are elaborated later in the part of overall assessment).

The syllabus of civic education at the lower secondary education (grade 6-9) includes more civil rights-related lessons than those of primary education and involves a deeper insight into human rights.² At grade 6, for example, there are a wide range of related units, such as Unit 12 - United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, Unit 13 - A citizen of

the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, Unit 15 – The right to and responsibilities for education, Unit 16 - The right to be protected in terms of life, health, honor and dignity, Unit 17 - Inalienable rights to accommodation, Unit 18 – The right to privacy of correspondence, telephone and telegraph communications. At grade 7, there are also a wide range of related units, such as Unit 13 – The right to care, education and the right to be protected of Vietnamese children, Unit 14 - Protecting the environment and natural resources, Unit 16 – The right to freedom of belief and religion, Unit 17 - Government structure of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, Unit 18 - Political structure at grassroots level. At grade 8, such units are Unit 12 - Rights and responsibilities of a citizen in the family, Unit 16 – The right to own property and responsibilities for respecting other properties, Unit 18 – The right to complaint and denunciation, Unit 19 – The right to freedom of speech, Unit 20 - Constitution of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, Unit 21 - Laws of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. At Grade 9, such units are Unit 12 - Rights and obligations of citizens in marriage, Unit 13 - Freedom to run business and obligation to pay tax, Unit 14 - Rights and obligations to work of citizens; Unit 16 – The right to participate in the state and social management, Unit 17 - Obligation to protect the country.

The subject of civic education teaches students their rights and duties to

family, school, society, and the environment, as well as to themselves. Human rights education is effectively incorporated and integrated in the subject, which facilitates the inclusion of the feature in other subjects in lower secondary education's curriculum such as Literature, History, Geography, Computer Science, Music, Visual Arts and Physical Education and so on.

Accordingly, students at junior high school can learn, grasp and exercise many teenage-appropriate personal rights, namely the right to life, the right to live with parents, the right to keep in contact and reunite with their parents, the right to care, right to education and aptitude development, the right to play and recreation, the right to identity, freedom of belief and religion, the right to be protected from violence and abandonment, the right to be protected from sexual abuse, the right to be protected from being trafficked and kidnapped, etc.

That human rights education is incorporated and integrated in civic education and other subjects enables students at junior high schools to understand the moral rights, coupled with legal and social rights better than primary school pupils.

At the same time, students are enabled to learn, grasp and exercise their duties to themselves, family, as well as to school, community, society, and country, as stated in Articles 37 - 41 of the Law on Children 2016.

Third, in terms of incorporating and integrating contents of human rights education in the curriculum of senior high schools:

Based on the Ministry of Education and Training's Decision No. 16/2006/QĐ-BGDĐT effective from May 5, 2006, curriculum of senior high schools include: Literature (standard & advanced course, grade 10-12), Math (standard & advanced course, grade 10-2), Civic Education (standard course, grade 10-12), History (standard & advanced course, grade 10-12), Geography (standard & advanced course, grade 10-12), Computer Science (standard course, grade 10-12), Education on national defense & security (standard & advanced course, 35 periods/year), optional subjects (standard & advanced course, grade 10-12), Collective education (standard & advanced course, grade 10-12), After-class activities: 4 periods/month (standard & advanced course, grade 10-12), Career orientation: 3 periods / month (standard & advanced course, grade 10-12), Vocational education: 3 periods/week (standard & advanced course, grade 11).

The contents and methods of human rights education at the senior high schools are best incorporated and integrated in civic education subject. Besides, they can also be seen in certain integrative themes of other subjects such as Literature, History, Geography, Computer Science, Education on national defense and security, Collective

Education and Vocational Education (which are elaborated in the part of overall assessment).

In the syllabus of civic education in senior secondary education (grade 10-12), civil right and human right education are closely associated with more intensively philosophical and political approach. More general theories with a number of abstract contents are introduced with such as “materialistic worldview and dialectical materialism”.

The syllabus of civic education in grade 10 is divided into two parts: 3 / citizens and forming world view and scientific methodologies, 2/ Citizenship and morality, with a number of obligations of citizenship being mentioned. In grade 11, the syllabus consists of two main parts: 1/ Citizens and economic development, 2/ Socio-economic development policy. In Grade 12, the syllabus is comprised of two main parts: 1/ Law in everyday life; 2 / Citizens and the law.

Specifically³, at grade 10, the syllabus has the following units relevant to the aforementioned themes: Unit 1 - Materialistic worldview and dialectical materialism, Unit 2 - The objective existence of the material world, Unit 9 - Man is historical subject and the goal of social development , Unit 12 - Citizens with love, marriage and family, Unit 13 - Citizens and community engagement, Unit 14 - Citizens and national construction and safeguarding, Unit 15

- Citizens and responsibilities for joining hands to address global issues, Unit 16 - Self-improvement. At grade 11, the core themes are reflected in the following units: Unit 1 – Citizens and economic development, Unit 9 - Socialist state, Unit 10 - Socialist democracy, Unit 11 - Population and employment policy, Unit 12 - Policies on natural resources and environmental protection, Unit 13 – Policies on education and training, science and technology and culture. At grade 12, the relevant units are Unit 1- Law in everyday life, Unit 2 - Law enforcement; Unit 3 – Every citizen is equal before the law, Unit 4 – Citizens’ equality before the law in different aspects of life, Unit 5 - Equality among ethnic groups and religions; Unit 6 - Citizenship and fundamental freedoms, Unit 7 - Democratic rights of citizens; Unit 8 – Citizens’ rights to education and development.

At the upper secondary education, students have reached adolescence, thus, human rights education is raised to higher level compared to that of primary and lower secondary education. Besides moral rights, students are instructed to grasp legal, social and political rights such as the right to property, the right to privacy, the right to be protected against labor exploitation, the right to be protected in sanctioning of administrative violations, the right to access information and participate in social activities, the right to expression. At the same time,

students are instructed to learn, grasp and do a number of duties stated in Articles 37 - 41 of the Law on Children 2016 (like in lower secondary education).

Overall assessment: In primary and secondary education, the contents and methods of human rights education at the senior high schools are not only incorporated and integrated in Ethics and civic education subject but also can be seen in other subjects through integrative themes such as:

- *On the theme of individuals and family:* The theme is integrated in all subjects. Through different approaches and presentation, students are somewhat taught certain human rights such as the right to life, the right to birth registration, the right to care, the right to live with grandparents, parents, and siblings and duties to care for family members.

- *On the theme of career:* Scores of subjects of different levels aim to educate students to value all kinds of jobs, and especially encourage them to strive for professions which require skills and talents in a modern society such as information technology, business and the like. Hence, students can gain a deep understanding of different jobs as well as the rights and responsibilities in each job, thereby choosing the right career path.

- *On the theme of fauna and flora:* Different subjects involve different ways of teaching students about the animals and plants. Some subjects help students learn about the characteristics and

importance of fauna and flora while as part of some after-class activities, students are required to plant or take care of trees. Thus, they can be better aware of their rights and responsibilities for the protection of animals and plants, especially native ones in local areas while developing a sense of responsibility for environmental protection.

- *On the theme of hometown, country and Uncle Ho:* Subjects in the curriculum involve organizing field trips for students to learn about historical sites and landscapes in local areas in particular and in the country in general. This theme, along with others such as family, plants, animals, and the like helps raise awareness of students about the link between the rights of the nation and the rights of citizens in general and students in particular.

- *On the theme of philosophy, politics, law at senior high school:* Such subjects as civic education and education on national defense and security enable senior high school students to grasp a theoretical, political, legal understanding of the natural world (plants, animals, oceans, continents, universe, etc.) and the social world (human, state, and political, legal, economic and cultural organizations, etc.) together with human rights and civil rights. This serves as a theoretical, legal, political foundation for their understanding of human rights and citizenship.

In addition, the contents and

methods of human rights education are also incorporated and integrated in other subjects such as STEM, with a view to utilizing the integrative approaches among STEM subjects including Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics. The subject encourages students to develop their own products as well as the ones of their group which help bridge the gap between theory and practice, thereby teaching students to understand their own rights and responsibilities and respect others, in the era of digital world in particular and in the real life in general.

b) Methods of human rights education in curricula of primary and secondary schools

Firstly, regarding the choice of age-appropriate approaches and methods, specifically based on psychological and cognitive features of children: Four principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child(1989) are ensured. First, children should never be subjected to any discrimination, irrespective of sex, national or social origin, health or other status and so on. Second, best interests of the child must be guaranteed. Third, the right to survival and development of children must be ensured. Fourth, it is vital to respect the views of the child. "Learner-centered" approach, therefore, is adopted in order to promote engagement of students and value their different characteristics, qualities and

abilities. As part of the approach, teachers need to communicate regularly, and develop attachment with students as this can help them choose most appropriate educational methods.

Second, with respect to the methods of human rights education:

- *Human rights are mainly educated through indirect methods:* It means that human rights are not taught directly in a way that its definition, history, content, scope and the like are presented. Instead, the curriculum is designed to inform students of human rights' importance and relate these rights to students' most familiar contexts such as family, school, neighborhood while clarifying their rights and fundamental responsibilities in the daily life.

- *Human rights are educated directly in the civic education subject,* especially that in senior high school. For example, world views and dialectical materialism are presented, in relation to human rights. Besides, the definition, characteristics and roles of rights are elaborated.

- *Various techniques,* such as brainstorming, role-play, games, group discussion, storytelling, among others are employed.

Different teaching and learning methods have their own strengths and weaknesses. Therefore, teachers have paid attention to choose and diversify teaching methods properly, based on the lessons' objectives and other factors

(teachers' teaching preference and students' capabilities, etc.)

Over the last few years, in basic education, the application of information technology has been promoted, and teaching aids have been employed properly and effectively, with a view to better exercising the rights to education of students. Some prime examples are artifacts, historical pictures and photos, tapes, maps, diagrams, statistics, videos and electronic lesson plans.

At all educational levels, management board and teaching staff, especially form teachers have effectively undertaken their responsibilities for ensuring the right to education of students.

2. Shortcomings of the incorporation and integration of contents and methods of human rights education in curricula of primary and secondary schools

a) Shortcomings in terms of contents of human rights education

- It is necessary to stipulate which content of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) and the Law on Children in Vietnam (2016) should be included in the curriculum, so that students can find the consistency and connection between citizens' rights and human rights, and the content can be more appropriate for each educational level and context.

- The content of moral rights has not been specified or elaborated properly

and logically, from basic to more advanced level, based on students' educational level. For example:

+ The right to life: It is necessary to specify and elaborate the following rights more properly, namely the right to birth registration, the right to acquire a nationality, right to live with parents, the right to keep in contact and reunite with their parents, the right to surrogacy and adoption.

+ The right to care, education and play: It is necessary to specify and elaborate the following rights more properly, namely the right to surrogacy and adoption, the right to care and nurture, the right to education and aptitude development, the right to play and recreation, freedom of belief and religion.

+ The right to be protected: It is necessary to specify and elaborate the following rights more properly, namely the right to be protected from violence and abandonment, the right to be protected from sexual abuse, the right to be protected from harmful drugs, the right to be protected in sanctioning of administrative violations, the right to be protected in the event of natural disasters, environmental pollution and violent conflicts, the right to social security, etc...

+ The right to participation and development: It is necessary to specify and elaborate the following rights more properly, namely the right to education, the right to access information and

participate in social activities; the right to expression; the right to identity, rights to equality of children with disabilities, etc.

- There have been no plans to train and instruct school management board, and teachers how to design, organize and customize a wide range of activities and orientation which raise students' awareness of their own rights, respect those of others, while encouraging them to reflect and to turn awareness into more appropriate behavior.

b) Shortcomings with regards to methods of human rights education

- Teachers, especially those in secondary education are often trained to teach one subject. Thus, when they are assigned to teach in an integrative way, for example, to instill the human right education in the lesson, some might face difficulties. In other words, many teachers are not ready for integrated teaching.

- As a matter of fact, many teachers and learners still need to strictly follow the content of textbooks. So far, textbooks are considered as "ordinances" that teachers must adhere to. Lessons have to be clearly planned beforehand, for example, what pictures will be used, and how long it should be shown, etc. Moreover, as the passive learning still dominates, students tend to learn what teachers have taught by heart, and teachers are reluctant to be creative. Meanwhile, the incorporation and integration of human rights education involve creativity and autonomy.

- Some teachers are reluctant to communicate regularly and spend time developing attachment with children while neglecting characteristics of each child in order to choose the most appropriate educational methods and give them a sense of physical and emotional security.

- Some teachers and schools are reluctant to adopt experiential education methodologies which allow students to experience and explore the surrounding environment in various ways. Meanwhile, the methods help arouse students' interest in the lesson, on the basis of "learning through play" principle while giving them opportunities to actively explore and be creative. Besides, some teachers and schools have not blended harmoniously between group and individual learning, and tend to overlook the unique characteristics and capacities of each student to find the most suitable teaching methods that suit their needs and tastes.

- In the teaching and learning of civic education, especially at the senior high school, the human rights-based approach has not been directly used in order to meet the subject's objectives and expand its scope where the contents of civil rights and human rights are better linked. Although the contents and methods of civic education are basically compatible with the contents and methods of human rights education, the approach is mostly indirect (only

the necessity and significance are presented). Specifically, at secondary education, lessons on civic rights education are mainly concerned with illustrations from daily life contexts, and reasons for and significance of the rights being underscored as a conclusion. At senior high school, the approach is more direct when the civic education touches upon theories and methodologies and philosophy (i.e., dialectical materialism). However, many teachers at high schools, especially those at senior ones, have not directly clarified the contents and methods of human rights education for example, by directly using the concepts of children's rights, women's rights, the rights of the elderly even though senior high school students are old enough and have sufficient background knowledge to learn the theory and methodology of human rights education. ■

References

(1) Integration, derived from Latin, means to establish the common, the whole, the unity on the basis of linking the individual parts together in a whole.

(2) Ministry of Education and Training, *Citizen Education 6, Citizen Education 7, Citizen Education 8, Citizen Education 9*, Vietnam Education Publishing House, Hanoi, 2007.

(3) Ministry of Education and Training, *Citizen Education 10, Citizen Education 11, Citizen Education 12*, Vietnam Education Publishing House, Hanoi, 2007.