
INTEGRATIVITY AND INTERDISCIPLINARITY IN RELIGIOUS AND LITERARY EDUCATION

Olivera Gajić* and Slađana Zuković

*University of Novi Sad, Faculty of Philosophy, Department of Pedagogy, dr Zorana Djindjića 2,
Novi Sad, 21000, Serbia*

(Received 9 September 2012, revised 24 April 2013)

Abstract

The paper focuses on the analysis of significance and possibilities of implementation of integrativity and interdisciplinarity in the teaching process. In that context, we presented the results of the study the objective of which is focused on the analysis of examples of correlation and integration of didactically transposed contents of Religious Education and Literary Education. The contents correlation assumptions have been considered through the analysis of curricula and textbooks of the above-mentioned subjects at elementary and secondary school levels. Based on the analysis it has been determined that correlation approach can be adequately applied at an elementary school level in the field of linking the contents of Religious Education with the contents encompassing the works of folk literature, while at a secondary school level the correlation can be set with the works belonging to artistic literature, as well as with the topics linked with certain texts from the Bible. For the needs of this paper we singled out one example for each correlation of the above-mentioned contents that presents well the potential of correlation-methodological system in Religious and Literary Education. The results of the research lead to the conclusion that integrativity and interdisciplinarity contribute to modernisation and optimisation of the teaching process.

Keywords: interdisciplinarity, correlation-integration, methodological system, religious education, literature

1. Introduction to the research context

The current education is more and more committed to interdisciplinary knowledge that is based on correlation and integration processes. The objective is to link knowledge both horizontally and vertically through different subjects, which should contribute to comprehensive vision and holistic consideration of problems and phenomena in the environment. The analysis of any phenomenon from different aspects shows its value implications. This is the way to acquire not only comprehensive knowledge but also a comprehensive value determination, which means their true, wholesome, and deep understanding.

*E-mail: gajico@ff.uns.ac.rs, telephone and fax numbers: +381 (0)21 450 419; +381 (0)63 88 34 908

The relevant literature often quotes integrative and interdisciplinary teaching as very close and mutually linked terms that imply the process of developing capacities of comprehending and understanding of reality in whole instead of learning of isolated parts of curricula in the fields of certain sciences. Integrative and interdisciplinary education is defined as: (1) large scale researches of knowledge in different subjects that refer to the aspects of a community that children live in; (2) shortcuts through subjects that link different aspects of education into logical units, in a holistic way that reflects a realistic interactive world; (3) unique attitude to common elements in knowledge that is the motivator for finding of new relations, creating of new models, systems, and structures; (4) applied methodology and language of several disciplines aiming at the analysis of the central topic, problems, or experiences; (5) combining of several school subjects into a single active project resembling to the way in which children adopt subjects in the real world, unified into a joint activity; (6) new form of thinking; (7) education from within for transfer of knowledge with the use of mental models [1, 2].

The idea of integration of the teaching process has been arising in its development under different names (e.g. concentration, correlation, globalism, complexity, etc.) and it has often been limited only or mainly to the curricula, which was too narrow. Currently, the integration of the teaching process is treated much wider and it encompasses numerous integration processes and procedures in schools and in teaching, such as: integration of curricula, personal integration of students in different numeric formations, personal integration of teachers in a team work, etc. [3].

1.1. Challenges of correlation-integration system in the teaching process

Correlation and integration occur in the current methodology theory and practice as methodological approaches that are achieved via interdisciplinary methodology (in the curricula, textbooks, literature on methodology) and as methodological principles and methodological models.

Methodological system that is based on significant determinants of integration processes is the *correlation-integration methodological system*. This system enables the establishing of content links and relationships at several levels: within a single school subject, within a group of similar school subjects, or between different school subjects [4, 5]. The *correlation* points to mutual links, co-relation of similar or different contents, i.e. their elements. In methodological theory and practice, it is based on parallelism and functional linking of certain scientific and artistic contents of two or more disciplines (at the reception, and theme-problem levels, namely at the theme and structural levels), as well as shaping of unique, wholesome view of the world. *Integration* unifies and firmly connects the contents, namely parts of the contents into logical, organic unit – unique structure [6].

The application of correlation-integration system in the teaching process requires high inventivity in treatment of mutually similar contents belonging to

different arts (or sciences), which has to be planned in a team way, which, in turn, implies creativity and multifold expertise of teachers [4]. Interdisciplinary teaching requires teachers to research, collect and link information from different sources and incapacitate students in such a way to recognise the connection between facts they learn at classes in different subjects, and adopt knowledge they will be able to apply in a real context.

Some authors [7, 8] put an emphasis on co-operation between the competent and teachers oriented towards creativity, and they see the key to the success of interdisciplinary teaching in that. The first step is for teachers to establish links, meet and organise themselves according to competences and creative needs. Each teacher should get hold of the curricula of other teachers and find in them the contents that are the same or similar to those they deal with within their own curricula. It is necessary for teachers to plan and organise their time well. Joint planning of time is necessary in order to enable teachers to select topics, research sources, discuss about teaching forms and means, and co-ordinate the curricula. It cannot be precisely said which number of teachers is optimal for realisation of the said methodological system, but some authors [8, 9] agree that it would be optimal to involve as many teachers of different subjects as possible.

The analysis of potentials of correlation-integration methodological system in the teaching practice will be presented in this paper through examples of linking of religious education and literary education since the contents of these subjects provide a good basis for application of didactical-methodological pluralism in the teaching process. Considering that our analysis deals with confessional religious education, based on theological-church, anthropological-pedagogical, and historical-cultural grounds, we shall place a special emphasis in the text that follows on the analysis of specific characteristics of didactical-methodological pluralism of religious education in the educational system of the Republic of Serbia, and in connection with that to the possibilities of application of the principle of correlation in teaching of this subject.

2. Religious education in the education system of the Republic of Serbia

Religious education was introduced in the education-teaching system of the Republic of Serbia during the school year of 2001/2002 as facultative subject with confessional properties. During the following school year it got the status of an optional subject while during the school year of 2003/2004, which was characterised by the official beginning of the reformed school system in Serbia, religious education (together with the subject titled Civic Education) got the status of mandatory alternative optional subject. The introduced model of mandatory option assumes also a regular status of this subject in organisation and distribution of subjects in schools. The religious education curriculum for elementary schools has been designed through two education-teaching periods (from the first to the fourth grade and from the fifth to the eighth grade), the aim of which is to accomplish the best possible content and education-teaching

harmonisation. The curriculum based on such a concept opens up additional space for religious education in secondary schools.

Within the official programme documents [*Službeni glasnik RS – Prosvetni glasnik*, 7, 2001], religious education has been presented as a unique, gradual, and continuous education-teaching process with clearly marked purpose, objectives, and tasks that are to be fulfilled. The main objective that is set is to teach pupils about religion and spiritual experience of their own, historically given Church or religious community, and the need for an open and tolerant dialogue and respect for other religious experiences, scientific knowledge, philosophical views and all positive experiences and achievements of the mankind. The objectives of development of social relations between pupils and establishing of ecological awareness are also emphasised.

The main tasks of religious education include providing a comprehensive religious view of the world and life to pupils, as well as the possibility to learn about their religions in their doctrinal, liturgy, social, and missionary dimensions, all in the spirit of tolerant relationship towards other religions and accepting all positive experiences of people irrespective of their national and religious affiliation. The above-mentioned objectives should be accomplished at both information-cognitive and experience and activity plans, which opens up the possibility to direct the development of religious attitudes in a systematic way.

Taking care of the place of religious education and teaching at schools, observing the specific characteristics of religious education, and the criteria of ‘hierarchy’ of religious contents presented in teaching units, the concept of the curriculum of religious education is based on principles of ‘open curriculum’ that provides space for free and creative work of both pupils and teachers [10]. A special attention is directed toward adequate application of didactical-methodological principles that enable adopting of contents and accomplishing of objectives of religious education and teaching in a creative and communication prone way. In that sense, the related literature [11] emphasises that, in addition to providing of theoretical knowledge on religion, the contents of religious education should help young people to critically consider their own life and all the problems and issues of the society and the world they live in.

In short, the main purpose of such a concept of religious education in school is the development of personality that will be sensitive to reality it is surrounded with, in particular to religious dimension of that reality. At the same time, religious education should develop the capacity of students to learn about themselves and offer the vision of life that contains high moral principles based on Christian and humanistic values.

2.1. Importance of application of the correlation principle in religious education

Linking of educational and teaching, rational and emotional dimensions of Religious Education is aimed at opening the doors for students to safely learn,

with clear signs, about the questions for which their religion or their fate has “traditionally routed path“ of truth [12]. This approach also implies active cultural work, entering into the field of creative work and spiritual development, which provides space for better understanding of science, art, and moral.

Specialised literature [13-15] emphasise in particular the importance of quality preparation for each teaching class, along with importance of application of didactical-methodological pluralism aimed at activating all pupils' psychical and spiritual predispositions, importance of inspiration of teachers of religious education for new ideas and creativity in teaching, and the capacity to adapt the overall work to knowledge, capacities and interests of pupils for efficient realisation of curriculum of religious education. Such work assumes the previous pedagogical education of teachers of religious education, as well as continuous professional improving and following up of pedagogical and methodological literature.

In addition to the above, we should also emphasise the importance and necessity of application of the principle of correlation in the teaching process for the purpose of fulfilment of the religious education concept that is going to be adaptable in school-pedagogical and social sense, as well as functional in didactical-methodological sense. This principle implies primarily the internal correlation, i.e. harmonisation of religious education contents that are shaped by doctrinal, moral, Biblical, liturgy, and facts based on experience. Namely, harmonious linking of the above-mentioned contents of religious education enables their adequate educational-teaching impact in a concrete religious experience and education of pupils. This means that the principle of correlation strives towards the fulfilment of fruitful connections between the general human experience and concrete religion living and testification.

On the other hand, Religious Education requires the most fruitful inter-subject correlation with objectives and contents of other subjects observing the principles of overall development of a pupil, in compliance with intercultural approach to religious education and teaching. Considering that religious culture is one of the fundamental pillars of culture and education in general, knowledge about religion and its values facilitates exceptionally the understanding of history, philosophy, literature, painting, sculpturing, architecture, music, opera, ballet, theatre, film, ecology, etc. [16]. Therefore, teachers of religious education are faced with the necessity for constant innovations of their own knowledge both in the field of theology, and in all those subjects they will try to establish the correlation with. It is also necessary to keep in mind the fact that pupils may have difficulties in understanding the contents of religious education due to insufficient or inappropriate previous knowledge, different affinities, and potentials. It is thus very important for presented contents to be in compliance with the pupils' reception potentials so that terminology-notional basis of this subject is brought as close to them as possible [14].

When it comes to the importance of correlation of curricula of different subjects with the curriculum of religious education, specialised literature is of the opinion [16, 17] that the sense of the above-mentioned correlation should not

be brought down merely to the fact that there are similar school subjects and similar curricula, but that it is necessary to strive towards temporal harmonisation of treatment of teaching topics which can be matched according to their similarity. It is very important to establish this type of correlation with literary education, which studies literary pieces linked with religious topics in explicit or implicit way.

2.2. *Inter-subject links and co-relationship between religious and literary education: orientation towards manifested and latent contents*

The system of inter-subject links requires an entirely new form of organisation of the teaching process – linked curricula units and subjects, their contents, methodologies, objectives, and tasks in a unique structure. This form of organisation of the teaching process implies the *thematic type* of inter-subject links that enables the analysis of the same topic from different perspectives, establishing of continuity, firmer systematisation of knowledge, linking of previously adopted knowledge and findings with the new ones [5] The topics that are common to a larger number of similar subjects occur in this type of links. These topics can occur at the same time, namely in the same class, and they can also occur at different times, namely in different classes. Each topic encompasses certain contents and certain range of information so that structuring of the topic is conditioned with the nature of the school subject, its objectives, and cognitive potentials of a pupil. Each subject contains the content elements (terms, facts ...) that serve as the basis for inter-subject links. On the other hand, there are also the characteristics that emphasise peculiarity of a certain subject and its methodological foundations.

Successful accomplishing of such inter-subject links between religious education and literary education requires successful defining of common content-information and methodological elements. It is thus possible, for example, to start from the fact that development of capacities for creative expressing within literary education represents a very important aspect and quality of religious education since creative expressing is linked with the overall religious maturing of pupils. It is also the fact that the Bible or the Holy Script as the main source of contents of religious education directs the attention to the possibility of cherishing of different kinds of oral and written symbolic expressing in work and communication with biblical texts, and developing of personal sensibility of pupils for the offered contents, as well as developing of moral and social attitudes [18, 19]. In addition to biblical texts, the contents of Religious Education also include non-biblical, literary-artistic and other texts. That is why it is important for the comprehensive religious development of pupils that they know and constantly develop their interest in different types of literary-artistic pieces since it can help pupils to a high extent to understand deeper and in more comprehensive way, and recognise biblical lesson in all its important aspects [16].

In addition to teaching Literature, it is possible to link the contents of Religious Education with other subject as well: Musical culture, Art culture, History, etc. However, we will focus further on examples of relations between religious Education and literary Education, reflecting, naturally, on other subjects.

3. Methodology and research design

The *subject of the research* refers to application of correlation-integration methodological system in the process of religious education and literary education. The intention is to mark the examples of integrativity and interdisciplinarity that could be in the function of enlightening, deepening, and supplementing of fundamental values and knowledge that are adopted via these subjects. The *objective of the research* is directed to the analysis of examples of correlation and integration of didactically transposed contents of religious education and literary education.

Philosophical-theoretical background of the research is based on socio-constructivistic and interpretive approaches that enable understanding of a complex world of adopted experience from the aspect of those who have had the subject experience [20]. *Socio-constructivistic approach* includes the aspect of individual constructivism, based on which a learning individual tends to achieve coherency that assumes consensus as the last criterion in knowledge evaluation – truth or reality will depend only on constructions that several members of some social group will achieve consensus about [21]. *Interpretive approach* implies three key concepts – representation, interpretation, and reflexivity – which stimulate the development of both personal and social identities [22, 23]. This approach observes specific characteristics of a certain social context and assumes the possibility of efficient conducting of educational process only if we observe subjective understanding of its participants. A special emphasis is on importance of the concept of reflexivity through which the pupils are encouraged to review and take personal account of what they learn and explore the main assumptions of their own philosophy of life through meetings and interaction with others.

The research is based on *qualitative research paradigm* that provides wide possibilities in terms of linking of theory and practice, namely possibilities of most direct application of scientific results in the function of improvement of educational practice. In that sense, the research concept can be characterised as *action research* that contributes at the same time to learning about and enhancing of pedagogical practice and development of the grounded pedagogical theory [24]. An important characteristic of an action research is that it always arises in the context of changes, as an attempt of problem resolving [25]. It includes transformation of education practice, ‘controlled innovation’, namely the attempt to change and enhance the education practice, which is at the same time the method of learning about it [26].

Since it is the matter of the research of *exploration character*, a *general orientation hypothesis* was set, which was more an indication of possible tendencies than the statement with firm theoretical or empirical basis. Namely, it is assumed that examples of correlation and integration of religious education and literary education contents will point to the possibility to accomplish more flexible and creative approach to teaching by applying the principle of integrativity and interdisciplinarity and overcome rigid and established work patterns in such a way. We applied *non-probability sampling strategy*, namely the selection of a sample based on judgement and suitability. The *technique of contents analysis* was used in data collection. The subjects of the analysis were the teaching contents of Religious Education and Serbian Language and Literature in the curricula and textbooks for these subjects in elementary and secondary schools. The collected data were the subject of qualitative analysis, while the conclusions were derived based on data interpretation.

4. Discussion

The assumptions for correlation of Religious Education contents with the contents in Literature have been considered through the analysis of curricula and textbook references of the above-mentioned subjects at elementary and secondary school levels. Based on the analysis it was found that the correlation approach could be applied in an adequate way at an elementary school level in the field of linking of the Religious Education contents with the contents that include the works of folk literature, while at the secondary school level the correlation could be established with the works belonging to artistic literature, and with the topics related to certain texts from the Bible. For the needs of the present paper, we singled out one example for each correlation of the above-mentioned contents that represents in a good way the potential of correlation-methodological system in Religious Education and Literature teaching.

4.1. Folk literature

The possibilities for correlation in this field have been considered through the analysis and interpretation of epic pieces – fairytales, fables, and epic folk poetry. Fairytales and fables provide particularly wide possibilities in that sense. For example, in *fairytales*, good always wins over the evil, justice over the injustice, truth over the lies, and infidelity and crime are punished while honesty and sincerity are rewarded as virtues taught by Religious Education. Specific characteristics of a fairytale originate from the essential sense it carries within that relies on a man's constant aspiration for affirmation of humanistic values. A man in a fairytale is omnipotent since he conquers the forces of nature with the assistance of supra-natural, superior forces. The world of fairytales is unique; a man creates it even today because life would be impoverished and ugly without it. Every nation has its fairytales and we thus divide them into Serbian, Russian, Eskimo, Japanese, Chinese, Finish, Danish, etc. The mere name fairytale

suggests the fact that everything that goes on represents a collective experience of people and that it should be taken for granted. It is an artistic creation, the world of fiction... The fairytale is always the battle ground for two opposed principles: good and evil, with clearly and strictly drawn boundaries between them – evil is always absolutely black, and good is always absolutely white. In the end the white always wins – justice prevails. Justice, as the supreme Christian imperative.

The folk fairytale *Čardak ni na nebu ni na zemlji* (*The Trellis Between the Sky and the Earth*) [4, p. 351] is a proper example of a fairytale used in school curriculum: it is short, interesting, and it has all most important elements of the fairytale structure. The fairytale is based on aspiration to conquer new space, although its proper use in teaching purposes requires strong previous perception of its text. After deep experiencing of the fairytale, the text plan is revealed and determined, which is followed by learning about its contents and analysis of characters, meaning ethical (humanistic and religious) values in it. The results of a joint work contribute to the development of pupils' imagination, sharpening of their attitudes toward justice and injustice, judging of bad human actions and affinity for human nobility.

On the other hand, *fable* as the text reference used in schools offers numerous and diverse possibilities for application of correlation-integration system in younger elementary school classes. Fable does that with its shortness and utter condenseness of its text directed toward expressing of certain edifying, didactical thoughts in allegoric form. That is why Aristotle considered fables a rhetoric genre and gave them a significant place in his *Rhetoric*. Due to underlying abstractness that can be found in a fable's moral, which is expressed in a dense language expression, Lesing was of the opinion that fable is the subject of Philosophy. Many philosophers who have been dealing with fable study share his opinion. In school, fable reading found its place as a literary form long ago. The text is brought down to the most needed language material, the event seems real, direct, and transparent, nouns have no attributes or appositions, verbs are without their determinants, there are no figures of speech, except for the fact that the whole fable is an allegory, and animals in them have constant symbolism. However, with its short length and language economics it can mislead the reader to believe that it is a simple and light school reading. Fable contains rhetoric, along with philosophy, and literary form, which makes its artistic structure exceptionally complex artistic phenomenon. The moral (lesson to be learnt) of the fable makes its central part – its sense. The story and moral are firmly directed one toward another, they make the text coherent, emphasising in such a way the didactic character of a fable. With such a structure, a fable is directed toward the message about appropriateness of human behaviour, about the moral. The value of the message is that it is to be understood throughout the entire life and tested in most diverse real-life situations.

Each fable is drama in small, most often a comedy. In the composition of a fable, it is easy to notice the elements of drama plot: exposition, plot, culmination, reversal, resolution. The characters are animals, but they are

conditional characters – holders of human qualities. Since its dramatic property is ordinarily of comic character, human imperfections are exposed to mockery, just as they are in comedy [27]. As fox is a very frequent character in fables, we can use the example of the fable *The Fox and the Goat* to show human qualities: cunningness, wisdom, selfishness, infidelity... During the analysis of a fable we can activate pupils' experience and link it with previously analysed fables (*The Stork and the Fox*, *The Fox and the Chickens*, etc.). It should be approached in accordance with its nature, both in reading and in analytical-synthetic work. Therefore, a small drama conflict (ethical problem) is read so that the reading suggests clearly its main sense: slowly, with longer pauses, with intonation that provokes thinking. The fable *The Fox and the Goat* is particularly suitable for application of problem resolving procedures since it contains a small conflict, and participants in that conflict impose the need to take certain attitudes toward them. This is, in itself, the problem situation. The analysis of this situation in the teaching process can contribute to accomplishing of the following educational tasks that are closely connected with the objectives of religious education: cherishing of solidarity and mutual support; cherishing of positive personal qualities – tolerance, nobility, and humanity; stimulating of critical relationship towards one's own actions and behaviour; cherishing of the sense for ethical values and moral principles; spotting and observing weakness and imperfections of others; cherishing of optimism and belief into one's own strengths and potentials; cherishing of the feeling of gratitude for the good deed and benefaction and the need to do good in return to good deeds; cherishing of humane feelings towards all those who fight for justice, etc.

In addition to fairytales and fables, *epic poetry* also offers very important elements for correlation of Religious Education with the folk literature pieces since it emphasise not only heroic deeds but also the importance of good manners, wisdom, honesty, righteousness, empathy with the threatened ones, and sympathy for the weak [18, p. 378]. The example of correlation of this genre with the contents of Religious Education will be presented through the analysis of epic, ethically exceptionally strong poem *Marko Kraljevic and Kostadin Bey*. This poem provides possibility for establishing of correlation with the contents of Orthodox religious teaching through classes filled with discussion about celebrating of the 'slava', namely the day of the saint who is the protector of one's home and family, ceremonies in the house and in the church, etc.

During the analysis of a poem, it should be insisted on its theme, while dialogue form of a poem should be used for the role reading exercise. The pupils will notice that Marko Kraljevic and Kostadin Bey struggle in a dialogue due to a different attitude to celebrate slava or Christian name day. The Christian message that the poor should be given alms because Jesus Christ used to help such individuals and He taught that we should all observe the principle of 'love thy neighbour', namely that all people irrespective if they are poor or rich, are our neighbours. This is valid also for impoverished and poor friends of ours, while grading is the most obvious in the gravest of all the sins that refers to non-observing of the Gods' Commandment. "Honour your father and your mother, as

the LORD your God has commanded you, so that you may live long and that it may go well with you in the land the LORD your God is giving you.” (Exodus 20.12, Deuteronomy 5.16). The bey’s parents are alive, but they are not at the table although they should ‘drink the first glass of wine’ and enjoy the highest respect at the table.

Based on presentation of this content, in accordance with interpretive approach, the pupils should be given the possibility to express their own relationship toward celebrating of their Christian name or their slava through the process of interpretation and reflection. Based on all that we can conclude that the Christian name day is the day when one should show the deepest loyalty to God and most noble relationship toward people by celebrating the saint protector of a person’s home. It is clear that it is easier to interpret the meaning of a Christian name or slava with pupils who already have knowledge about the things that fate and honesty of human behaviour require from those who celebrate their Christian name day, and such knowledge can be acquired through the contents of Religious Education. In addition, according to constructivistic approach, the correlation of the above-mentioned contents provides the possibility for pupils to assess what is proper and what is improper human behaviour through construction of knowledge about the Christian name day and its celebrating and to take a valid attitude towards it.

4.2. Artistic literature

The application of the principle of correlation of Religious Education and teaching Literature is analysed through the works belonging to artistic literature. *Lyrical poems* provide exceptionally important possibilities in that field since, in addition to dynamic structure, the dimensions of lyrical poems are also determined by its contexts – literary, artistic, and cultural [28] that provide the basis for efficient inter-subject linking and integrating. We will give the example of the poem *Kalenic*, a *lyrical poem* by Vasko Popa that is analysed in the fourth grade of secondary school [29]. This poem belongs to contemporary lyrics and it has a specific structure, nature, and properties of modern lyrical text. It is not easily accessible, being sometimes closed within itself, often insufficiently communicative, it speaks in an enigmatic way, and therefore it requires an effort to be subdued and enjoyed in.

The fresco painting of Archangel Gabriel, the work of an unknown medieval painter, inspired Vasko Popa to write the poem ‘*Kalenic*’. The poem was named after a monastery, and thus the pupils can present the data about the monastery Kalenic they collected. This monastery, which is in the vicinity of Rekovac, is dedicated to the Entry of the Most Holy Theotokos into the Temple and it is the endowment of Protovestiarios Bogdan, a renowned nobleman of Despot Stefan Lazarevic. The church was built and painted in the period from 1407 to 1413. The wall decoration contains usual themes of the Moravian School: big holidays, earthly life of Christ and his miracles, as well as the cycle of apocrypha hagiography of the Holy Mother in the narthex. One can also

discuss with pupils about the Nemanjić's state where the monasteries used to have not only the religious but also an important cultural and political role during the Turkish rule.

The construction of knowledge about the motive, idea, and message of a poem is derived from interpretation of this lyrical poem (the analysis of lingual-meaning structure and composition, lingual-rhythmical and basic reflective-emotional tones, etc.). In addition, the resort to reflexive approach enables involving pupils in reconsideration of their own relationship toward historical and cultural tradition of the Serbian people, moral values, humanistic messages on standing for personality, defence of human dignity, humanity, about the defence of life in general [28].

The correlation with the contents of religious education could refer primarily to the issue of the Orthodox Art Theology (literature, painting, architecture, music), but also to other contents where the emphasis is placed on the development of Christian (humanistic) values – cherishing of patriotic feelings, nobility, love. The correlation can also be established with History (Serbia during the rule of the Nemanjićs, medieval monasteries, Kalenic monastery), painting (fresco of the Archangel Gabriel, Pec Patriarchy, 1340), spiritual music of that time, etc.

4.3. Bible

When it comes to teaching and curriculum of Serbian language and literature, the Bible is studied only in the first grade of secondary school as a part of literature of the ancient times and as a representative example of old Hebrew literature. The analysis of reference textbooks [30] shows that only the following texts are present from the Old and New Testament: A Legend of the Great Flood - The Sermon on the Mount – Suffering and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Biblical motives, which are not always analysed in the scope that the significance of the topics would require, are exhausted with these topics. A correlative moment with the Religious Education is emphasised the most in the teaching topics that deals with God as the Holy Trinity: Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit; God as the being of community (God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob) – God as personality.

The correlation-integration methodological system is the most appropriate for realisation of the above-mentioned lessons. The example is the analysis of the topic of *The Sermon on the Mount*, which represents the collection of Christ's ethical thoughts and sayings collected in the Gospel of Saint Mathew in the New Testament (Chapters 5-7). This piece about Jesus on the Mount corresponds in the Old Testament with the second and fifth book of Moses, which contains Ten Commandments given to people by Jehovah via Moses.

In accordance with the requirements of correlation-integration methodological system, the motivation for the lesson dealing with *The Sermon on the Mount*, could be stimulated by playing a clip from the American film about Christ titled 'The King of Kings' directed by Nicholas Ray that shows this

sermon (lasting for about ten minutes). Dürer's illustration of *The Sermon on the Mount* could also serve the same purpose. In presentation and interpretation of *The Sermon on the Mount*, the emphasis should be placed on Christ's sermon talking about how happy (blessed) he truly is. It is a well-known place about nine blessings where he points out that blessed are the people who are aware of their spiritual needs, those who mourn, those who are of mild temper, those who starve and those who are thirsty for righteousness, merciful, pure in heart, peaceful, those who are persecuted for righteousness, and those who are objurgated and spoken falsely of because their belief in Jesus Christ. In the analysis of the phenomenon of blessedness and true happiness, the pupils should be given the opportunity to reflect their spiritual needs and situations that make them satisfied and bring them the feeling of life fulfilment.

In addition to the sermon on blessedness, in *The Sermon on the Mount* Jesus preaches about forgiveness, suffering, mercifulness, love for people. Pointing to an ethical principle of "love thy neighbour as thyself" (Leviticus 19. 18), it is important to emphasise what Christ tells about treating those who offend others. In accordance with socio-constructivistic approach, the pupils should analyse their own understanding of Christ's words: "But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also" (Mathew 5.39) and they should reflect their attitude towards the lesson that one should not reply to hatred with hatred and that the enemy should be defeated with what is distant to him – love, and tolerance.

An important part of the sermon refers to Christ's lessons on the trap of attributing too much importance to material things and assets, as well as to lessons about the road a man should take in life. In his sermon, Christ points to two possibilities: the right path is narrow and difficult, and only a few find it. A wide and spacious road symbolises easier life, but it is often the wrong one. However, there are more people who take it because they are not ready for sacrifices and relinquishment. The threat for a man to be misled is big and Christ warns: "Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves" (Mathew 7.15). This part of Christ's sermon provides a good opportunity for pupils to discuss in a group their understanding of spiritual wealth and realise that these lessons are timely unlimited, primarily through the analysis of challenges of contemporary social context.

It should be particularly insisted on interpretation of Christ's advice, which is also called the golden (holy) rule of every man's behaviour: "So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you" (Mathew 7.12). The discussion about a famous sermon can be ended here, and the last messages should be: "Judge not that you be not judged, for with the judgment that you judge, you will be judged, and with the measure that you measure, it will be measured to you..." (Mathew 7.2), "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you" (Mathew 7.7) – expecting an echo of these words to be heard in the minds of pupils for a long time [31].

The above-mentioned example of correlation provides the possibility to pupils to deepen their quantum of knowledge from the Bible and facilitates the

interpretation of other literary pieces that contain more or less visible biblical sub-text. Such conclusion is derived from the fact that creating of big literary works was motivated by the Bible as 'The Book of Books' [18]. The works of Dostoyevsky, Tolstoy, Kafka, Crnjanski, Andric, Danilo Kis, etc. are the best evidence to that. Namely, it is difficult to interpret these works without linking them with the Bible and its sub-text that is hidden in the work being interpreted. During the process, we inevitably affect the spiritual growth of pupils, the creating of ethically honest young man, which is what religious education is directed towards [16].

5. Conclusions: recommendations for integrative and interdisciplinary education

Starting from the significance of application of integrativity and interdisciplinarity in the education process the paper emphasise in particular the obviousness of a very close link between Religious Education and Literary Education. The results of our research, which have been supported by examples of correlation in teaching of these subjects, provide the basis for accepting the initial assumption that correlation-integration approach to a certain topic, and proper selection of tasks and methods of work can break the routine and habitual forms in the teaching process. It is the matter of different, more creative and open approach to education and it is to be expected that knowledge being adopted in such a way will become more useful and adequate for application in practical life.

It is important to point out that a large number of authors [8, 32-34] advocate the attitude that correlation-integration approach is neither the only possible, nor the optimum approach for all situations in education and that it is necessary to have differentiation of educational contents per subjects. However, the integration of contents does not exclude differentiation. Namely, knowledge in science is divided per disciplines and they have their logical structure, and pupils should understand them studying subjects that are the reflection of a certain discipline. Nevertheless, the objective of disciplinary approach is not merely acquiring of knowledge in one field, but the essence is in developing of logical and abstract thinking through entering into logic of the subject and contents classified in one discipline, as well as adopting of specific language of the given discipline [34]. Therefore, the teaching process should maintain differentiation into subjects, but with the enhanced linking between subjects of contents that can be linked naturally. The content integration can result with overcoming of weaknesses of the subject system, which does not mean it is necessary to eliminate differentiation of contents in different subjects. Differentiation and integration are two sides of the same dialectic process, i.e. the process of knowledge acquiring. It is logical that integration moves from intra-subject and inter-subject one.

In addition to different possibilities for accomplishing of inter-disciplinary approach, there are certain limitations or difficulties in its application. The

difficulties are most often linked with the teaching staff related problems and the lack of time [35]. In the education system of the Republic of Serbia the teachers are educated to teach one subject (possibly two in the system of studies with two main subjects) and they very often have no wider knowledge in similar subjects. This implies including of a larger number of teachers in inter-disciplinary education. However, the teachers are not trained to teach in such a way and they have difficulties in fitting into such a regime of work. Even if they want to cooperate with their colleagues and apply the correlation-integration methodological system, the organisation of the teaching process in school represents a large problem. The above-mentioned limitations are nevertheless possible to overcome successfully if the teachers are competent and ready to dedicate their time to joint planning directed towards linking and integration of different curricula.

Acknowledgement

The paper has been elaborated within the Project titled 'Quality of the education system of Serbia in the European perspective' (179010), which is financed by the Ministry of Science and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia in the period from 2011 to 2014.

References

- [1] C.R. Finch, N.R. Frantz, M. Moony and N.O. Aneke. *Designing the thematic curriculum: an all approach*, CA, National Center for Research in Vocational Education, Berkeley, 1997, 97, available at: http://nrccte.education.louisville.edu/sites/default/files/publicationfiles/designing_the_thematic_curriculum.pdf.
- [2] K. Lake, *Integrated curriculum. School improvement research series*, Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, Portland, 1994, available at: <http://www.nwrel.org/archive/sirs/8/c016.html>.
- [3] N. Potkonjak and P. Šimleša (eds.), *Pedagoška enciklopedija*, vol. 1, ZZUINS, Beograd, 1989, 444.
- [4] P. Ilić, *Srpski jezik i književnost u nastavnoj teoriji i praksi. Metodika nastave (Serbian language and literature in teaching theory and practice. Teaching methodology)*, 2nd edn., Zmaj, Novi Sad, 1998, 695.
- [5] D. Rosandić, *Metodika književnog odgoja i obrazovanja, Školska knjiga*, Zagreb, 1988, 203.
- [6] Z. Diklić, *Književni lik u nastavi. Metodičke osnove za interpretaciju književnog lika (Literary figure in the teaching. Methodological basis for the interpretation of a literary character)*, Školska Knjiga, Zagreb, 1978, 224.
- [7] P.R. Aschbacher, *Education Leadership*, **49(2)** (1991) 16-19.
- [8] M. Polić, *Metodički ogledi*, **12(2)** (2005) 61-72.
- [9] S.M. Drake, *Education Leadership*, **49(2)** (1991) 20-22.
- [10] I. Midić, *Pravoslavni katihizis. Priručnik za nastavnike osnovnih i srednjih škola (Orthodox Catechism. Handbook for primary and secondary school teachers)*, ZZUINS, Beograd, 2004, 87.
- [11] Z. Kuburić and S. Zuković, *Verska nastava u školi (Religious Education in schools)*, CEIR (Savez pedagoških društava Vojvodine), Novi Sad, 2010, 202.

- [12] Z. Kuburić and S. Dačić, *Metodika verske nastave (Religious Education Methodology)*, CEIR, Novi Sad, Beograd, 2004, 178.
- [13] R. Bigović, *Crkva i društvo (Church and Society)*, Hilendarski fond pri Bogoslovskom fakultetu SPC, Beograd, 2000, 330.
- [14] K. Končarević, *Pripremanje nastavnika za nastavu pravoslavnog katihizisa i planiranje nastavnog procesa*, in *Pravoslavni katihizis u osnovnim i srednjim školama*, R. Popović & S. Dabić (eds.), Mitropolija beogradsko-karlovačka, Beograd, 2005, 51-64.
- [15] D. Sando, *Veroučitelj u savremenoj nastavi*, in *Pravoslavni katihizis u osnovnim i srednjim školama*, R. Popović & S. Dabić (eds.), Mitropolija beogradsko-karlovačka, Beograd, 2005, 69-78.
- [16] O. Gajić and S. Zuković, *Zbornik Odseka za pedagogiju*, **20/21** (2007) 162-179.
- [17] S. Ivanović, *Teme*, **1-2** (1998) 129-139.
- [18] P. Ilić, *Srpski jezik i književnost u nastavnoj teoriji i praksi. Metodika nastave, (Serbian language and literature in teaching theory and practice. Teaching methodology)*, 4th edn., Zmaj, Novi Sad, 2006, 100.
- [19] J. Schuitema, G. T. Dam and W. Veugelers, *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, **40(1)** (2008) 69-89.
- [20] T. Schwandt, *Constructivist, Interpretivist Approaches to Human Inquiry*, in *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (eds.), Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, 1994, 118-137.
- [21] M. Bocoş, *Didactica Disciplinelor Pedagogice. Un Cadru Constructivist*, Paralela, Pitesti, 2007, 45.
- [22] K. O'Grady, *British Journal of Religious Education*, **32(2)** (2010) 119-131.
- [23] P. Vermeer, *Religious Education: The official journal of the Religious Education Association*, **105(1)** (2010) 103-116.
- [24] G. Gojkov, *Kvalitativna istraživačka paradigma u pedagogiji*, Prilozi kvalitativnim istraživanjima u pedagogiji, Visoka strukovna škola za obrazovanje vaspitača, Vršac, 2007, page.
- [25] L. Haggarty and K. Postlethwaite, *Oxford Review of Education*, **29(4)** (2003) 423-448.
- [26] G. Smith, *Journal of Community Education*, **1** (1982) 31-46.
- [27] M. Maljković, *Basna lektira mudrosti. Kreativni postupci u metodičkoj interpretaciji basne*, Zmaj, Novi Sad, 2007, 176.
- [28] O. Gajić, *Problemska nastava književnosti u teoriji i praksi. Rezultati eksperimentalnih istraživanja (Problem teaching of literature in theory and practice. Results of experimental research)*, Filozofski fakultet, Novi Sad, 2004, 352.
- [29] L. Nikolić and B. Milić, *Čitanka sa književnoteorijskim pojmovima, za četvrti razred srednje škole (The reader of literary terms, for the fourth grade of secondary school)*, ZZUINS, Beograd, 1999, 164.
- [30] L. Nikolić and B. Milić, *Čitanka sa književnoteorijskim pojmovima, za prvi razred srednje škole (The reader of literary terms, for the first grade of secondary school)*, ZZUINS, Beograd, 1993.
- [31] L. Petrovački, *Godišnjak Filozofskog fakulteta u Novom Sadu*, **30** (2002) 5-12.
- [32] J. Brophy, and J. Alleman, *Education Leadership*, **49(2)** (1991) 66-67.
- [33] C.B. Faust, *Education in Chemistry*, **9** (1989) 138-139.
- [34] J. Šefer, *Kreativne aktivnosti u tematskoj nastavi*, Institut za pedagoška istraživanja, Beograd, 2005, 87.
- [35] R. Brandt, *Educational Leadership*, **49(2)** (1991) 24-26.