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FEATURES OF TEACHING GEOGRAPHY IN A SMALL-INTEGRATED SCHOOL

The comprehensive and fundamental changes in the educational system will not fail to affect rural schools, especially small-integrated schools. Rural small-integrated schools are the main component of the national education system, as well as the main means of training personnel for the development agricultural production and rural culture. The organization of the educational process in small-integrated schools places special requirements on the teacher's training and approach to his professional activity. The article analyzes the prospects and problems of developing of small-integrated schools in Kazakhstan today and recommendations for teaching geography in small-complex schools. At the same time, the role of such schools in preserving settlements, expanding traditional branches of the economy, improving the demographic situation, and creating a space for cultural education in rural society is considered. The research findings are aimed at providing methodological assistance to teachers and improving the quality of education in small schools. The methodological techniques (subject integration, "vertical work") and tasks in teaching geography for small-integrated schools are summarized. An expert survey of 25 teachers of small-integrated school in the Turkestan region was conducted. Teaching geography in small-integrated schools presents unique challenges and opportunities, shaped by the school's size, resource availability, and student composition. These schools, often located in rural or sparsely populated areas, typically combine multiple grade levels into a single classroom, requiring innovative teaching approaches to accommodate diverse age groups and learning needs.

Keywords: education, small-integrated school, combined class.

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Шағын жинақты мектепте география пәнін оқыту ерекшеліктері

Білім беру жүйесінің біртұтас және түбегейлі өзгерістерге ұшырауы ауыл мектептеріне, әсіресе соның ішінде шағын жинақталған мектептерге әсерін тигізбей қоймайды. Ауылдық шағын жинақты мектептер жалпы мемлекеттік білім беру жүйесінің негізгі құрамдас бөлігі бола отырып, ауылшаруашылық өндірісі мен ауыл мәдениетін көтеретін кадрлар даярлаудың басты құралы болып табылады. Шағын жинақталған мектептерде білім беру процесін ұйымдастыру мұғалімді даярлауға, оның кәсіби қызметіне көзқарасына арнайы талаптар қояды. Мақалада қазіргі таңдағы Қазақстан Республикасының шағын жинақты мектептерін дамытудың перспективалары мен проблемаларына талдау жасалды, шағын жинақты мектептерде географияны оқыту бойынша ұсыныстар берілді. Сонымен қатар мұндай мектептердің елді мекендерді сақтаудағы, шаруашылықтың дәстүрлі салаларын кеңейтудегі, демографиялық жағдайды жақсартудағы, ауылдық қоғамда мәдени білім беру кеңістігін құрудағы рөлі қарастырылады. Зерттеу нәтижелері мұғалімдерге әдістемелік көмек көрсетуге және шағын жинақты мектептерде білім беру сапасын арттыруға бағытталған. Шағын жинақталған мектептер үшін географияны оқытудағы әдістемелік тәсілдер (пәндерді интеграциялау, "тік жұмыс") және тапсырмалар жинақталды. Түркістан облысының шағын жинақты мектептерінің 25 мұғаліміне сараптамалық сауалнама жүргізілді. Шағын жинақталған мектептерде географияны оқыту мектептің мөлшерімен, ресурстарының болуымен және оқушылар құрамымен айқындалатын бірегей проблемалар мен мүмкіндіктермен байланысты. Ауылдық жерлерде немесе халқы аз аудандарда орналасқан бұл мектептер әдетте бірнеше сыныпты бір сыныпқа біріктіреді, бұл әртүрлі жастағы топтар мен оқыту қажеттіліктерін ескеру үшін оқытуға инновациялық тәсілдерді қолдануды талап етеді.

Түйін сөздер: білім беру, шағын жинақты мектеп, біріктірілген сынып.

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Особенности преподавания географии в малокомплектной школе

Система образования претерпевает кардинальные и масштабные изменения, что неизбежно сказывается на сельских школах, особенно на малокомплектных. Будучи важным звеном государственной образовательной системы, сельские малокомплектные школы являются основным инструментом подготовки кадров для сельскохозяйственного производства и развития сельской культуры. Организация образовательного процесса в таких школах выдвигает особые требования к подготовке учителя и его профессиональной деятельности. В статье проводится анализ перспектив и проблем развития малокомплектных школ в Республике Казахстан на современном этапе, рекомендации по обучению географии в малокомплектных школах. Отдельно, рассматривается их роль в сохранении населённых пунктов, расширении традиционных отраслей хозяйства, улучшении демографической ситуации и создании культурно-образовательного пространства в сельских сообществах. Исследовательские результаты направлены на предоставление методической помощи учителям и повышение качества образования в малокомплектных школах. Обобщены методические приемы (интеграция предметов, «вертикальная работа») и задания в преподавании географии для МКШ. Проведен экспертный опрос 25 учителей МКШ Туркестанской области. Преподавание географии в малокомплектных школах сопряжено с уникальными проблемами и возможностями, которые определяются размером школы, наличием ресурсов и составом учащихся. Эти школы, часто расположенные в сельской местности или в малонаселенных районах, обычно объединяют несколько классов в одном классе, что требует применения инновационных подходов к преподаванию, чтобы учесть разновозрастные группы и потребности в обучении.

Ключевые слова: образование, малокомплектная школа, объединённый класс.

Introduction

The change in the socio-economic structure of society, the shift in value orientations, as well as the country's entry into the global educational space require a revision of the current pedagogical theory and established practice of the entire pedagogical process, and to set the task of modernizing the educational and upbringing paradigm. In the new stage of educational development, priority is given to the development of the personality, the development of its potential, the formation of independence, the humanization of education, and the increase of the general cultural and humanitarian development of students in the process of educational work. The introduction of new ideas and technologies into the practice of rural schools is of particular importance since the methods of teaching and education in rural schools require special application and skill from the teacher.

The rural small- integrated school is an integral part of the national education system. To save the village, education in the village must correspond to the social expectations of the people, the social values of the rural community, each family, and the individual. The school is an important part of the rural society and cannot develop without it. Therefore, the future of a SIS depends, first of all, on the de-

velopment of agricultural production and the socio-cultural sphere of the village (Shcherbakova, 2012).

Nikolai Alexandrovich Korff is considered the founder of small multigrade schools. In the mid-19th century, during the zemstvo period, he introduced a three-year school model where one teacher worked simultaneously with students of different levels, assigning tasks to some students while others worked on written assignments. Further development of such schools was later influenced by prominent educators like L. Tolstoy and K.D. Ushinsky (Voytekhevskaya, Sazonova, 2009).

Small multigrade schools also exist internationally. For example, in Finland's Lapland, where the indigenous Sami people live, these schools are widespread. The Lapland government takes significant measures to address their challenges, such as hiring transport to bring children to schools located up to 100 kilometers away, with expenses covered by local authorities. They also focus on preserving the Sami language and culture (Zaitseva, 2008).

Literature review

In the United States, the concept of "one-room" schools is common in sparsely populated rural areas. In such schools, a single teacher instructs children of various ages, often teaching several subjects

simultaneously. Each student follows an individual learning plan. A key difference from other countries is that American teachers in these small schools receive higher salaries, often double those of urban teachers, to provide financial incentives (Zykov, 2006). Portugal faces a different challenge with its rural small schools, which often struggle due to insufficient resources, poor academic outcomes, and high teacher turnover. To resolve these issues, the Portuguese government implemented reforms in 2005-2006 by closing small schools and creating larger school clusters, which improved overall efficiency and addressed key problems. In Australia, small multigrade schooling began with radio-based education. Students connect with teachers daily for one hour via radio, during which lessons are delivered, and feedback is provided. Assignments and homework are completed independently and sent back to the teacher. The government supplies all necessary radio equipment, and students can study through this system up to grade 10 if needed (Karma, 2024).

The emergence of small-integrated schools in Kazakhstan began in the 60s of the 19th century in connection with the pedagogical activity of Y. Altynsarin and has not ceased to exist.

At the beginning of the 20th century, a group of intellectuals led by our great personalities such as M. Auezov and A. Baitursynuly laid the foundations of the schools that were integrated into the education system. First of all, they tackled the issue of providing schools with the necessary educational materials. As a result of such good works, mathematics textbooks and methodological materials were prepared at the beginning of the 20th century. In this way, at the beginning of the 20th century, the foundations of schools were laid in the educational system in rural areas. Most of the first Kazakh schools in the rural areas at that time were small-integrated elementary schools. In 1916, their number was 727, and the number of students studying there was 2,414. In 2023, the number of such schools reached 2,723, and the number of students was about 3.8 million. This is about 40% of the total number of schools (Krylov, 2017).

A number of our scientists have drawn attention to educational work in small schools and improving the quality of education for students studying there. Consideration of effective ways of teaching several classes at the same time is written in the works of Zh. Aymaulytov, Zh. Karzhasbaev, G. Begaliev, G. Suleymenov, A. Askarbaeva, M. Burlibayev, and G. M. Khrapchenkov B.Kulmagambetova,

A.Askarbaeva, K.Aimagambetova describes the unique features and methods of organizing lessons in a small-integrated school and questions of effectiveness of one-subject, one-thematic lessons are considered by Z.Beysenbaeva, M.Saipin, E.Shapaeva, B.Katembayeva, O.Satkanov.

In the USSR, until the beginning of the 70s, the term “small integrated school” was used to refer to an elementary school, where several classes of less than 15 students were combined into one class set. Only one teacher works with the class set. For a small-integrated school, special didactic materials were developed that allow students of one class to organize their work while the teacher works with students of other classes. Since the 70s, the concept of “small integrated school” began to include part-time secondary and secondary schools with a small number of classes, and the number of such schools is gradually increasing. Small-integrated schools have become one of the factors that make up the village.

Materials and methods

G. Suleymenov is one of those actively involved in researching the problem of small-integrated schools in Kazakhstan.

In the journal “Kazakhstan School” he published an articles in 1963 “How to make a schedule of lessons in small general education primary classes?”, 1965 “On the management of the educational process in two general education schools” and “Organization of the educational process in small general education schools” were written jointly with R.Murataliev in 1968. Here, the author first talks about the learning process in paired classes in small-integrated schools:

- 1) new material is covered in both classes;
- 2) new material is presented in one class, and revision is conducted in the second class;
- 3) revision of previous material in both classes (in one class – control, in the second class – oral) lesson.

In the article written together with R. Murataliev, he considers visual aids very necessary, especially for small-integrated schools, and gives useful tips about the features and methods of their usage (Voytekhevskaya, Sazonova, 2009)

Pupils of small-integrated schools perform most of the tasks independently. In the pedagogical dictionary, individualization of education is defined as the organization of the learning process taking into account the individual characteristics of students, that is, to create optimal conditions for the realiza-

tion of potential opportunities for each student.

Individualization of training is carried out within the framework of general tasks and training content in the context of collective educational work.

A.A. Kirsanov believes that the individualization of education is a broad concept of the educational process, which includes the activity of the teacher, the activity of the student, and the entire process of teaching and training (Zaitseva, 2008).

When talking about the formation of students' independent work, it is necessary to take into account two closely related tasks. The first of them is to develop the independence of students in cognitive activities, to teach them to learn independently, and to form their worldview; the second is to learn to use existing knowledge independently in study and practical activities (Lebedeva, Akpayeva, 2010).

Independent work is divided into the following types:

- group
- pair
- individual (Tord, 2021).

The lesson structure in small integrated schools (SIS) has several unique features that distinguish it from lessons in other educational institutions.

The key and defining characteristic is that a single teacher teaches two or three different grade levels simultaneously in one classroom. The specific features of lesson organization in small integrated schools are as follows:

1. Combined classes require students to engage in independent work. In regular classrooms, teachers can allocate tasks specifically for independent activities, but in small integrated schools, this approach is not always possible. This is because the nature of assignments varies when teaching multiple

grade levels at the same time.

2. The amount of independent work for students depends on the teacher's workload in other grades. For example, first-grade students in a combined classroom may have shorter independent work periods, while second-grade students may spend more time working on their own. This results in lessons alternating between two main components: teacher-directed instruction and independent student activities.

3. The widespread use of handout materials is another distinctive feature of SIS lessons. This is primarily due to the increased need for independent learning in such schools.

4. The most challenging aspect of lessons in small integrated schools is the teacher's ability to effectively explain and reinforce new topics, which requires exceptional pedagogical and methodological skills (Baymoldaev, 2002).

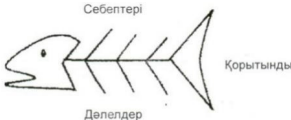
Results and Discussion

It is important to use critical thinking technology, game lessons, situational tasks, and creative exercises as individual and paired tasks in teaching geography in small-integrated schools. The peculiarity of the situational tasks is that it is focused on practice, but they require specific subject knowledge (often knowledge of several academic subjects) to solve them. Creative exercises – by performing tasks in which the student predicts possible events, complete the descriptions, and creates new images according to his creative plan, the student's business and skills in the subject of geography can be developed. Table 1 suggests methods that can be used in integrated classrooms (Le Grange, Ontong, 2019).

Table 1 – Methods used in teaching combined classes on the subject «Geography».

The topic of the lesson	Independent work form	Methods used			Grades
Objects of Geographical Research	Pair	“Misleading” (questions that can only be answered with yes and no). 5-10 questions will be given depending on the topic.			7th grade
	Individual	Working with cards: 1-student Great geographical discoveries 2-student Modern geographical discoveries			8th grade
		Years	A traveller	Main journeys	
	Group	Word puzzle: 2 classes together solve the word puzzle “Christopher Columbus”.			7th and 8th grades

Continuation of the table

The topic of the lesson	Independent work form	Methods used	Grades																																	
Geographical situation of the countries of the world	Pair	“Answer Relay Race” The teacher claps his hands, and with each clap, the students take turns naming countries. Whoever names more countries gets more points.	7th grade																																	
	Individual	Working with cards: Analysis of which countries border Kazakhstan and features of the border	8th grade																																	
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Features of the boundary		Countries																																		
Hydrosphere and its components	Pair	Evaluate water resources using the “Fishbone” method 	8th grade																																	
	Individual	Essay on the topic “Pollution of water layers”.	9th grade																																	
	Group	The “Brainstorming” method What role does the hydrosphere play in human life? Each class answers within the framework of their knowledge.	8th and 9th grades																																	

From the given table, we can see the methods and tasks that are often performed individually and in pairs in small-integrated schools. This means that in 2 or more combined classes, there is a low possibility of conducting group work according to age and subject content.

A lesson in a combined class is the main form of the educational process of small-integrated schools. It follows the general theme of the lesson but has several differences in the structure of the lesson. The integration of subjects in the modern small-integrated school is one of the ways to actively search for new pedagogical solutions, to develop the creative potential of pedagogical teams to have an effective and reasonable impact on students, being the only means of solving the problems of a small-integrated school. Integrated education helps to overcome the fragmentation and mosaic of students' knowledge, and ensures that they acquire a unified knowledge, a set of universal human values. There are three levels of integration of the content of educational material:

intra-disciplinary, interdisciplinary, and transdisciplinary (Drescher, Podolsky, Reardon, Torrance, 2022)

All tasks for independent performance must be consistent and systematic with the topic of the lesson. Workbooks for the subject are also very important in an SIS. A workbook is a basic tool for a SIS teacher, it allows to organize students' independent work at the reproductive and problem-finding levels, as well as to conduct a joint lesson. Through these types of individual work, an SIS teacher can educate a student not only with sufficient knowledge but also able to think logically and creatively and solve life problems independently.

R. Khazankin's “vertical work” method is suitable for these schools, an older student becomes the scientific leader of a younger student, and their joint work unites them into a general cognitive activity, expands their thinking, allows to implement continuity in the teaching of topics, to provide timely help to eliminate educational deficiencies of lower

grade students, to encourage repetition of educational materials of adults (Astambaeva, Uayisova, 2010)

In the research part of our article, the attitude of teachers of primary education to the organization of education in these schools is studied. A survey was conducted among the teachers of the SIS № 21, Hurlyzhol village, Maktaaral district, Turkestan region, working in the SIS. A total of 25 teachers living in small rural settlements with different family statuses participated in the survey. The survey included questions grouped into four blocks: about the optimal aspects of the educational process in an SIS; about the possibilities of an SIS; about the content and forms of the teacher's activities during the preparation and conducting of combined lessons in an SIS; about the interaction of participants in educational relations in an SIS. The results of the research were as follows:

Teachers who participated in the survey highlighted that in this type of school, a teacher prepares for 2 or 3 different topics to conduct a single lesson, which means they spend 2-3 times more time compared to teachers in regular schools (38%). Additionally, 35% of respondents noted that the low number of students in small integrated schools (SIS) limits the opportunities for group work during lessons. Another 27% of teachers pointed out the challenges of organizing specialized education due to the small student population.

Regarding issues faced during combined lessons in SIS, teachers emphasized the lack of methodological materials for such lessons (42%), the absence of standard programs specifically designed for SIS (31%), and the fact that, despite the prevalence of SIS in rural areas, higher education institutions do not provide specialized training for teachers capable of teaching multiple subjects simultaneously (27%).

After analyzing the shortcomings and challenges identified by the surveyed teachers, several solutions were proposed. These include providing methodological support through participation in workshops and conferences (21%), as well as the importance of attending professional development courses tailored for SIS teachers to exchange experiences with colleagues (59%). Furthermore, teachers suggested improving Internet speed in rural areas to facilitate online learning (20%) as an additional solution (Sadvokassova, 2000).

Conclusion

In conclusion, the results of the conducted survey testify to the fact that there are still unresolved aspects of the problems of the small-integrated

school from the normative-legal and educational-methodological point of view. It can be said that there are practically no group work types in learning activities. The development of this type of communication is important in pedagogy. Thus, when organizing the educational process in a small school, teachers often follow the teaching system for large classes. This is evidenced by the results of the survey of teachers working in small-integrated schools, as the majority of teachers unanimously mention the difficulties of working with small classes. Therefore, it is necessary to reconstruct the forms and methods of studying geography, a set of tasks, and a small set of methodological tools, focusing on school conditions, unique aspects of their work and meeting the individual educational needs of their students. They have mastered teaching methods, tools, and technologies and are committed to ongoing professional development. Nevertheless, they need support, such as organizing methodological seminars and professional development programs specifically for SIS teachers. Furthermore, it is essential to introduce specialized training programs in universities to prepare teachers for teaching multiple subjects or to offer extended professional training courses.

Small-integrated schools, often located in rural or remote areas, cater to students from diverse age groups and academic levels within the same classroom. These unique educational settings present both challenges and opportunities for teaching geography effectively. Below are the key features that define geography education in such schools. Teaching geography in a small-integrated school requires innovative approaches to overcome challenges such as resource limitations and multi-level classrooms. By leveraging local contexts, fostering interdisciplinary connections, and engaging the community, educators can create a dynamic and enriching geography curriculum that prepares students to understand and appreciate the world around them. Teaching geography in a small school requires a special approach that takes into account the specifics of small classes, limited resources and the need for individualized work with students. It is important for teachers to be flexible, to use integrated teaching methods, to combine theory with practice and to be locally oriented. Despite the difficulties, this form of teaching provides a unique opportunity to build close contact with each student, which contributes not only to the successful assimilation of educational material, but also to the formation of children's interest in geography, research skills and environmental awareness. Creative approach, use of modern technologies and

close connection with the local community will help to make geography lessons in a small school exciting and useful, and knowledge – deep and applied.

The specifics of teaching geography in a small-sized school present both challenges and opportunities for educators. Working in combined classes and with limited resources requires creativity, flexibility, and the ability to organize the educational process effectively for all students. A practical focus, integration with other subjects, and consideration of local features can make learning more meaningful and engaging. A small-sized school provides teach-

ers with a unique opportunity to apply an individual approach to each student, develop their analytical thinking, and foster skills for independent exploration of the world. Geography as a subject not only broadens students' horizons but also instills respect for nature and an understanding of global processes through the lens of local realities. Ultimately, successful geography teaching in such conditions depends on the teacher's willingness to combine traditional methods with innovative approaches, unveiling the richness of the world around to their students.

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Received 21.01.2025

Accepted 01.03.2025