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## EDUCATION OF STUDENTS FOR CULTURAL HERITAGE CARE - STUDYING THE PAST IS THE WAY TO THE FUTURE

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**Abstract:** *The study and understanding of our cultural heritage is of great importance in developing civic and national instinct among students. Cultural heritage is not only a remnant of the past, but also a relevant segment for our cultural and social identity as a nation, which represents social potential for further economic and cultural development.*

*It is of particular importance that students develop self-awareness about their identity from an early age, acquire knowledge about their homeland and the roots of the Macedonian people. It is necessary for students to expand their horizons, supplement the information from the textbook and realize that actually the past is what allows us to design the way to the future. Hence the focus of this scientific paper is aimed at actualizing the issue of educating students to nurture the cultural heritage, through the use of archaeological materials and various activities, which enable a simpler application of the integrated approach in teaching. The goal is to motivate students through education for nurturing and protecting cultural heritage at the local and national level, through a coherent and continuous approach to archeology in all educational cycles.*

**Key words:** cultural heritage, student education, integrated approach

### Introduction

In our educational system, it is undoubtedly necessary to make reforms, which will be aimed at the decade-long problems faced by this process. When we talk about educating students about cultural heritage and its preservation, we often ask ourselves: - "How this extensive topic can be implemented and processed in schools?". In order to achieve the desired goal, in addition to school activities where students get to know cultural heritage fictitiously or through pictures, only within the framework of teaching subjects that deal with this content, it is necessary to nurture an integrated approach in teaching and to organize a greater number of extracurricular activities, which will enable students to get to know the cultural heritage outside the school framework.

Acquainting students with cultural heritage during their education contributes to increasing their perception of cultural and social values. The upbringing and education of young people in the field of common cultural heritage provides an additional opportunity for self-knowledge, nurturing the roots and respect for the cradle that gave us life, i.e. acquiring a sense of identity through the culture to which we belong, transmitted from generation to generation.

Cultural heritage needs to function as a channel for sustainable development, by providing adequate education to raise awareness of its importance, because at one time each generation witnesses the irreversible loss of a large part of cultural heritage, due to natural disasters, wars, industrialization, pollution, extreme poverty, carelessness, undervaluing, satisfying one's own appetites and interests of individuals or groups, etc. The preservation of cultural heritage allows us to show how we have evolved into what we are today and to make an assessment of current conditions, because it is all an open concept and a dynamic process that reflects every component of life in the past, present and leads us to the future.

### 1. Defining the problem and basic terms

Upbringing, education and culture are concepts that are closely related to each other. That is why the problem that we will elaborate in this scientific paper is aimed precisely at highlighting the significance of the symbolism of cultural heritage on the one hand and on the other hand the students as individuals, who need to understand, appreciate and accept the culture, but also to know how to transmit and nurture its values.

**Cultural heritage** is a group of resources inherited from the past that people identify, regardless of ownership, as a reflection and expression of their ever-evolving values, beliefs, knowledge and transitions. This group also includes aspects of the environment, which result from the interaction between people, places and time. It represents a kind of potential resource for learning, as well as a communication medium, which advocates for social and multicultural cohesion.<sup>1</sup>

All in order to make it easier for students to understand what cultural heritage is and how to nurture and protect it, it is best to implement it in the educational system through an integrated approach in teaching, because students from a younger age still think on a concrete level. In fact, the holistic approach to teaching represents integrated learning, or we say that we have an integrated approach to teaching, which should be based on general civilizational knowledge, achievements and their practical application in general. Integ-

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<sup>1</sup> Даниел Ѓорѓиевски „Културното наследство во транзиција и образовните реформи“, УМНО. Accessed July 26, 2022. <https://umno.mk/kulturnoto-nasledstvo-vo-tranzicija-i-obrazovnite-reformi-vo-makedonija/?fbclid=IwAR3tVyRwJdDFQUZO0yuZuw2Kh2m3Lylr2t- vdf9TT9h4WdMM480o0QZcB6n4..>

rated teaching and learning focuses on the process, not the learning outcomes. Through this approach, it is possible to delete or partially and imperceptibly integrate, synthesize and realize meaningful connections (goals) between similar aspects of different teaching subjects.<sup>2</sup> Through integration, interdisciplinary, direct or indirect connections are established in the teaching process, so that students are encouraged to explore more interdisciplinary connections, connect them mentally and finally apply them practically.

In our educational system, the term integration is often equated with the term correlation. If we make a detailed analysis of the way in which the so-called integration of the teaching subjects, we can notice that it is actually more about the correlation of the teaching subjects. Most often, teachers make this mistake, because they do not make a quality connection of the set goals for individual subjects, but only connect and process teaching units that can be realized in a different way in individual subjects, without achieving the specific goals set in the teaching subjects.

## **2. Educational approach to cultural heritage**

We will see the connection between upbringing, education, culture and cultural heritage from the perspective of the educational system as a basic, basic process in which the child grows, develops and is educated, forms his own attitudes and becomes an adult member of the society and culture to which he belongs in a certain place and time. This process is followed by cultural good, which moves education, all in order to make a "step forward" for a real simultaneous movement of socialization and individuality of each individual, building his identity - "ME".

Primary education and further education of students is no longer just about acquiring reading and writing skills, but rather comprehensive development of the knowledge and values necessary for active participation in society. Even in the "World Declaration on Education for All"<sup>3</sup> from 1990, the importance of expanding means and goals, above all in primary education, is emphasized. It states that knowing how to read and write in the mother tongue strengthens identity and cultural heritage, but also that all the tools and channels of information available, communications and social action must be used to contribute to transmit essential knowledge and to inform and educate.

### **2.1. Education of the students to nurture and protect the cultural heritage**

The education of students to nurture and protect the cultural heritage is of particular importance. All educational activities related to the protection and nurturing of cultural heritage should be an integral part of the curriculum followed by students. According to the current situation of our educational

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<sup>2</sup> Министерство за култура на Република Македонија, Национална комисија на УНЕСКО 2012, 4.

<sup>3</sup> World Declaration on Education for All 1990.

system, it is necessary to offer a projection for the placement of upbringing and education for this activity, in accordance with the possibilities and needs of our country.<sup>4</sup> The education of students in the area of nurturing and protection of cultural heritage is represented in all levels of education and educational cycles, therefore it is necessary in primary education to emphasize the need to build appropriate mechanisms for the realization of separate educational activities, and then continue to transmit it through various forums to other levels of education.

When it comes to the education of students to nurture and protect the cultural heritage, the primary task for the teaching staff is to provide students with adequate theoretical and practical training. Due to insufficient practical application of theoretical knowledge, as we can see there are visible gaps appear in the nurturing and protection of cultural heritage. In fact, it is a matter of moral responsibility for the preservation of cultural heritage, which is instilled in students from a very young age. According to this, we can say that upbringing has the most influence within the framework of the educational process, during the formation of awareness among students for the protection of cultural assets. Some of the subjects with which primary and secondary students encounter cultural heritage are: society, society and history, history, ethics, geography, civic education, etc. In both levels of education, the contents related to nurturing and protecting the cultural heritage in the textbooks are very short, and in some of them this teaching unit is omitted. It is necessary to make a reorganization in the part of performance and the way of realization of the contents during the teaching hours, intended for studying the part about the cultural heritage, especially for its care and protection.

To preserve cultural heritage, a number of multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary learning and teaching opportunities are offered today. Due to the burden of school curricula and the great demands placed on teachers, the simplest way for students to develop a sense of the importance of preserving and nurturing cultural heritage is to apply an integrated approach to teaching. In this way, elements can be taken from other curricula of homogeneous or heterogeneous subjects and simply apply approaches that correspond to the needs and interests of students. Education in the field of cultural heritage also encourages teachers from different subjects to form teams and act interactively in favor of the preservation of cultural heritage.<sup>5</sup>

In accordance with the age of the students, many diverse and interesting activities can be organized, through which the students will get to know the cultural heritage, depending on the nature of the teaching subjects - history, geography, Macedonian language, art education, music education, etc. In the

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<sup>4</sup> T. Nacev, D. Veselinov "Protection of immovable cultural heritage through educating students of primary and secondary education". Paper presented at the International Scientific Conference, Shtip, September, 24-25, 2015., 266.

<sup>5</sup> Министерство за култура на Република Македонија, Национална комисија на УНЕСКО 2012, 4.

following, we will talk about different types of activities that can be implemented in teaching, where through a combination of these different teaching subjects, students can be educated about cultural heritage and its protection:

➤ **Bringing history to life through role play**

According to the experience so far, the greatest interest among students in learning the teaching content of any teaching subject is awakened through games. Often students who are younger have an interest in role playing. This type of game can be a real challenge for students, because it involves learning through problem-based questions and research. For the sake of a better working atmosphere, students can be divided into several groups, which brings out the effectiveness of teamwork. The students have the task of sharing responsibilities in the group and finding old pictures, videos and songs, through which they will be able to capture the appropriate interpretation. Each student has a role to play. Through the assigned roles, the students constantly communicate with each other, share ideas and finally come together to answer the questions, discuss and search for common aspects of their traditions. How the game will be designed and how its course will take place depends on the creativity of the teacher and the motivation of the students to work.

➤ **Visits to localities and museums**

- When organizing a **visit to localities**, it is necessary for the teacher to make a plan, in which he will foresee the organization and implementation of the activities that will be carried out in several steps:

- a preparatory visit to the locality by the teacher;
- preparation of a questionnaire intended for the students, before and after the visit to the site, to assess what and how much they learned;
- preparing students for a special type of activity, for example, reconstructing the past, telling stories and legends about the locality or making drawings of the given locality;
- planning the things that the students will have to follow up the visit after returning from the locality.<sup>6</sup>

- **Visits to museums** represent another important aspect in the education of students in the field of cultural heritage protection, where, in addition to teachers, museum employees also participate. In order for the visit to the museum to be of high quality, if it is a question of visiting a museum that has a large number of objects and artifacts, it is desirable to put an emphasis on a specific topic/area and hire a lecturer who has good knowledge of it. In this way, students will form a complete picture of a given subject or event that happened in the past.

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<sup>6</sup> Министерство за култура на Република Македонија, Национална комисија на УНЕСКО 2012, 7.

Before visiting a locality or museum, the teacher needs to prepare the students well and explain to them why they are visiting that locality or museum, what their tasks are, what they should expect to see, what to pay attention to during the visit and think about for issues you would like to discuss during and after the visit.

➤ **Visits or organizing workshops**

- It can be connected with the visit to the museums, so that the students can practically fully capture the process of making the craft products that they have seen in the museums before. Students will have the opportunity to see first-hand how traditional items are made and may be given the opportunity to make an item themselves.

- Students are divided into groups. Each group during the visit to a locality (connects with the previous activity) has the task of extracting as much information as possible about a specific mosaic (when it dates from, what is its meaning, etc.). Then according to a given photo, the students organize themselves to make similar mosaics from self-adhesive paper.

- Each student has the task of sharing a traditional recipe, which is usually prepared in his immediate family. Students' parents can also be involved in this activity. Parents with their child will have the opportunity to prepare the dish, and then present it and offer a tasting in front of other parents and students.

For all these activities, the school can organize the so-called an open picnic day intended to preserve, revive, nurture and highlight the significance of cultural heritage, where the students' handiwork and traditional recipes will be exhibited.

➤ **Through conversation with older generations to learn about cultural heritage**

The teacher can give the students homework to talk to their grandparents or other older people in order to find out as much information as possible about the cultural heritage. If any of them wishes, they can voluntarily participate in the classes and talk with students about the old traditions, songs, dances, stories they grew up with, etc. At the same time, each student should bring various old objects and photos and make a joint exhibition. Through the stories of the older generation, students can try to compare the past and the present, draw or make an object out of clay, make a story about how they consider culture and customs to be part of their everyday life, learn traditional dances or songs etc.

➤ **Traditional songs, dances and folklore**

Also, this activity can be performed in groups, for greater interaction between students. Each group is tasked with finding a traditional dance to a

traditional song, preparing a suitable choreography, and then recording a video tutorial. When the group is fully prepared, they pass on all the information about the dance to the rest of the students. According to the instructions, all groups teach each other the dances they have prepared.<sup>7</sup>

➤ **Together to the protection of cultural heritage**

When students already know what cultural heritage is and what its meaning is, an activity (making projects) can be carried out in which with the help of the teacher, students will define the basic threatening factors that affect cultural heritage. It is best to divide the students into several groups of 4 to 5 members. The purpose of this activity is to propose sustainable solutions for the protection and preservation of cultural heritage.

## 2.2. Digital national cultural heritage in 21st century classrooms

After the end of the pandemic, it was realized that raising the quality of education and increasing the capacity of the educational system is of top national interest, all in order to respond to the challenges of the new era. From the first series of events on the topic: "Digital Transformation of Education", which were organized by the Digital Transformation Council (DTC) at the Heidelberg Institute and the Forum for Educational Change (FOP), it was concluded that students want teaching with physical presence, but the educational system to be modified and modernized through the introduction of digital ways of learning.

Given the development of science in accordance with technique and technology, major information revolutions are taking place. Digital technology is transforming the way culture is produced, presented and consumed. Cultural heritage is material that is not suitable for rent, with digitization students can have easy and quick access to various cultural collections, i.e. rarely printed books, old manuscripts, research results, statistical data processing, libraries around the world, information analysis etc. In this way, it is possible to make the cultural heritage more accessible to a wider audience, and not only to those who have the means and opportunities to travel and see them.

A good step forward and an example that can be followed is the European platform for digital cultural heritage and the virtual face of the European Year of Cultural Heritage - Europeana, intended to improve the educational process and raise awareness of cultural heritage among students from minimum age. The platform provides free online access to numerous digital objects from various museums, records and documents from archives, libraries and galleries, photographs, 3D images, etc. Through a digital platform of this kind, students can gradually become familiar with their own cultural heritage, the issues of sustainable development and preservation of the unique cultural heritage

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<sup>7</sup> Учење од минатото, дизајнирање на нашата иднина: Европско културно наследство преку eТвининг 2018, 50-51.

through the integration of various creative teaching areas, in an interactive way. In order to ensure quality access to cultural heritage, IT tools are needed that will enable viewing of digital contents and interoperability between different applications, thus enabling electronic data exchange.

### **Conclusion:**

We all have the obligation to preserve and properly manage the cultural national heritage. Day by day it is more and more exposed to the risk of insufficient respect, care and concern. Cultural heritage is existing and alive, because it evolves over the years. It is essential to emphasize the problem of its understanding, interpretation, preservation, etc., so that it can survive for the future generations that follow.

Regarding this problem, we realize that our educational system has a very small number of available resources, which will make the study of the national cultural heritage of high quality and interesting for the students. In order to implement the approach to education of the young population, it is necessary to introduce specific educational content. The same contents should be a natural part of the curricula of individual subjects, by making an appropriate selection of their scope and content. In this context, we must point out that the contents of the subjects related to the protection of the cultural heritage need to be more numerous and elaborated in more detail. In some cases, it is necessary to give more priority to educational tasks than to educational ones. Through them, students will acquire the habit of protecting and preserving the national cultural heritage and thus build their cultural identity. For this purpose, it is necessary to approach essentially and with an exact placement of the program contents that will be processed. The introduction of contents of this type requires appropriate planning and reorganization of the curriculum (the lesson fund) and the curriculum (will the topics of preservation and nurturing of the national cultural wealth be part of a subject that is already being studied or would another separate subject be formed), and then the additional education of the teaching staff is of great importance, because their competence has a great influence on the knowledge that the students will acquire. In this context, we must not leave out the importance of extracurricular activities, which can be carried out through the self-initiative involvement of students with various sections, so that it will contribute to a greater perception of the national cultural wealth.

In our country, the way to introduce students to the national cultural heritage is still more based on classic activities, which are adapted and implemented depending on the opportunities offered by the school, the creativity and interest of teachers and students. Digitization of the educational process is gradually starting, but a lot of work still needs to be done to fully provide the necessary funds, materials and resources. The digitization of cultural heritage is already a more specific topic that is part of the process of upbringing and education of students. In order to reach the point of upgrading and modifying



more specific contents, it is necessary for the state institutions to fully invest in the reforms they plan and implement, starting from the essential segments. Only in this way can the quality of education in our country be improved and the foundations of the new era to come be laid. By teaching the new generations through the "trail of time" about cultural heritage, its preservation and nurturing, we "pave" the path that begins with events from the past, continues with events in the present and gives birth to new ideas for a better future!

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