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Article

Pedagogical Possibilities of Teaching Folk Oral Creativity Samples on the Basis of Interdisciplinary Integration in Primary Classes

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Abstract: In this article, we look at how teachers can use folk oral works - proverbs, riddles, fairy tales, and folk songs - across several school subjects in primary grades. Instead of keeping these materials only in native language classes, we tested what happens when teachers bring them into math, science, music, and art lessons. We ran a two-year trial with 240 students in schools across Bukhara region. Our results showed that students in the test group did better than their peers in learning new ideas, thinking more freely, and holding onto what they learned. We argue that folk oral works, when teachers use them in more than one subject, become a much stronger teaching tool than they are under the usual approach.

Keywords: Folk Oral Creativity, Cross-Subject Teaching, Primary Education, Proverbs, Riddles, Fairy Tales, Linked Teaching, Cluster Method, National Identity, Skill-Based Learning

1. Introduction

Anyone who has spent time in a primary school classroom knows that young children light up when they hear stories, songs, and word games. Textbook tasks rarely get the same reaction. Folk oral works - the proverbs that grandparents pass down, the riddles children share on the playground, the fairy tales parents tell at bedtime - feel deeply familiar to children in Uzbekistan. Yet our schools have long kept these materials locked inside the native language and reading classes. The question behind our research is simple: what would happen if we let folk oral works cross over into other subjects? [1].

This idea has roots in older thinking. Ushinsky and Vygotsky both pointed out that children learn best when new ideas link to things they already know from life. Folk oral works give teachers exactly that link. Take the proverb "Yetti o'lchab, bir kes" (Measure seven times, cut once). It teaches care and accuracy. It works as a math lesson about measuring. And it carries cultural weight. If a teacher uses it only once in a reading class, most of that value goes to waste [2].

The timing of our study matters, too. Uzbekistan's schools are going through major changes right now. The new curriculum puts more stress on building real skills and on keeping national culture alive in the classroom. Meanwhile, studies from around the world keep showing that cross-subject teaching - lessons that link two or more school subjects on purpose - leads to deeper and longer-lasting learning than teaching each subject on its own

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[3]. But there is very little written about how a primary school teacher in Uzbekistan should actually do this work. The how-to guides, especially in our context, are almost missing.

We set out to fill part of that gap. We built and tested a set of methods for using folk oral works in four subjects - math, science, music, and art - in grades 1 through 4. We had two goals: first, to create ready-to-use lesson plans that teachers could pick up right away; and second, to check whether these plans actually help students learn better than the usual way of teaching. Here is what we found [4].

2. Materials and Methods

We ran the study over two school years, from September 2022 to May 2024, in six primary schools across Bukhara region. We picked schools from both the city and the countryside on purpose, so that our results would not lean toward just one setting. In all, 240 students from grades 1 to 4 took part: we placed 120 of them in the test group and 120 in the control group. We matched the two groups as closely as we could by age, gender mix, earlier grades, and family income. We also talked to 30 working teachers through surveys and sit-down interviews to learn how they felt about cross-subject teaching and what stood in their way [3].

Before we started the lessons, we spent several months putting together a large bank of folk oral materials. In the end, we had about 500 proverbs, 300 riddles, 150 fairy tales, and 200 folk songs. Most of these came from printed Uzbek folklore books, though we also recorded some items straight from elderly people in local towns. We tagged each item by topic, the subjects it could fit into, and the grade level it suited best. Not all of them ended up in actual lessons - quite a few proverbs, for example, deal with grown-up topics - but having a big pool to choose from turned out to be very helpful when we sat down to plan lessons.

We split our work into three tracks. The first, and in some ways the most eye-opening, was math. Uzbek proverbs hold a surprising amount of number-related content. “Bir boshdan ikki quloq” (One head, two ears) gave us a way to teach young children about ratios and how to compare amounts. “Bitta guldan bahor bo’lmaydi” (One flower does not make spring) helped us explain the idea of a single item versus a group - a concept that first-graders usually find hard, but they picked it up quickly when we wrapped it in a saying they already knew. Proverbs about measuring, like the well-known “Measure seven times, cut once,” worked well as the starting point for short lesson blocks on units and being exact [4].

The second track tied riddles to science. At their heart, Uzbek folk riddles are little puzzles that ask children to watch closely and think step by step - the very same skills that science classes try to build. The riddle “Qo’li yo’q, oyog’i yo’q, eshikni ochadi” (No hands, no feet, yet it opens the door - answer: wind) gave teachers a fun and clear way to bring up weather, air flow, and forces we cannot see. Another one the children loved was “Yozda yashil ko’ylak kiyadi, qishda yalang’och turadi” (It wears a green dress in summer, stands bare in winter - a leaf-dropping tree), which we used to talk about how seasons change and how plants grow and rest. What struck us most was that students did not just learn the riddles by heart; many of them started making up their own riddles about things they saw in nature, and this turned into one of our best ways to check how well they understood the material [5].

The third track was the richest but also the hardest to set up: linking fairy tales with art and music. After reading a story like “Zukko qiz” (The Clever Girl), the children drew scenes from the tale, paying attention to colors and layout, while also listening to old Uzbek tunes that matched the mood of the story. These lessons reached students through several paths at once - they heard the tale, they watched pictures take shape, they held crayons and brushes in their hands — and this mix seemed to pull in children who might otherwise lose focus during a plain reading class [6].

In the test classrooms, teachers ran at least three linked lessons each week in place of the usual single-subject classes. The control group kept learning in the old way: folk oral materials showed up only in native language lessons, taught as they always had been. Both groups took the same tests at the start and end of each term. We used t-tests and effect-size counts to check whether the gaps between the two groups were real or just random ups and downs [7].

A quick word about how we shaped each lesson, because the small things mattered. Every linked lesson had three loose phases. In the opening (about 5 to 7 minutes), the teacher brought in the folk item - reading a proverb out loud, posing a riddle, or starting a fairy tale. In the middle part (25 to 30 minutes), students worked on tasks tied to a second subject that grew right out of the folk material. In the closing (5 to 10 minutes), the teacher pulled the threads together with simple questions like "What did the proverb teach us about numbers?" or "How did drawing the fairy tale help you get the story better?" We kept this framework loose on purpose; we told teachers to fit it to their own class rhythm rather than stick to a fixed script, and most of them did just that, getting more at ease as the weeks went on [8].

We also kept notes on how teachers set up their rooms. Teachers in the test group soon found that the old row-by-row desk layout did not work for group drawing, shared riddle-solving, or team storytelling. Most of them switched to cluster seating - four or five desks pushed together - and this small change turned out to matter quite a bit. Sitting close to each other drew students into talks more freely, and children who might have stayed quiet in rows found themselves part of the group.

3. Results and Discussion

The numbers painted a clear picture, though the things we saw in the classroom often told us even more. We start with the hard data and then move to what we watched and heard.

In math, weaving proverbs into lessons lifted how well students grasped new ideas by 18% compared to the control group [9]. But the nature of the gain mattered more than the number. Students in the control group could usually solve problems correctly, yet they often had trouble saying why a certain step made sense. Students in the test group, on the other hand, often reached for a proverb when they tried to explain their thinking. One boy in third grade, when we asked him why checking your work matters, answered with "Yetti o'lchab, bir kes" and then went on to say that you should always look twice before you decide. Teachers told us they saw moments like this again and again - times when what children knew from home and what they learned in math class came together in a way that neither subject alone would have made happen.

One proverb stood out. "Yettita usta uy soldi, eshigi yo'q qoldi" (Seven builders put up a house, but they forgot the door). We used it in a lesson about finishing a task fully, and it set off a lively class talk about planning ahead, doing things in the right order, and checking that nothing is left out - all habits that math teachers want their students to build. The proverb gave the children a sharp, funny picture to hang an abstract idea on, and that picture stayed with them.

Science showed even bigger gains. After our linked lessons, students held onto what they learned 22% better than the control group [10]. We think much of this came from the way riddles work: to solve a riddle, a child must look at clues with care, rule out wrong answers one by one, and pull the pieces together into a single answer - exactly what science asks people to do. Students who had spent the whole term solving nature riddles came to science topics with more nerve and more questions. One class project we had not planned at all - the students chose by themselves to make a "Riddle Book of Nature" - grew on its own and ended up teaching sorting and grouping skills better than any printed worksheet we had tried [11].

The fairy tale track brought the most visible shifts in how freely students worked. Children who had been drawing story scenes, picking music, and building simple hand puppets week after week showed clear growth in how well they spoke, how boldly they drew, and what their teachers called a "wish to try new things." These lessons reached different kinds of learners at once: children who learn best by seeing did well with the drawing part, those who learn by hearing took to the music, and those who learn by doing found their place in puppet-making and acting out stories [12].

One lesson chain is worth telling in full, because it shows how this linking plays out day by day. A second-grade class was reading the fairy tale "The Golden Watermelon" (Oltin tarvuz). Over three days running, the reading teacher told the story and led a talk about its meaning. Then the art teacher asked the children to paint the garden scene from the tale, and she taught them about warm and cool colors along the way. At the same time, the music teacher brought in a folk harvest song whose words echoed the tale's lessons about patience and hard work. On the fourth day, the math teacher took a plot point from the story - a farmer sharing watermelons with his neighbors - and used it to teach simple sharing and splitting into equal parts. By Friday, the students had looked at the same story through four different subject lenses, and each look had made the others clearer.

When we asked teachers what they thought of these linked lesson chains, most of them spoke warmly, though not without noting the rough spots. A few said the first linked lessons felt clumsy - lining up topics across subjects took more planning than they were used to, and the timing did not always fall neatly into place. By the second term, though, most teachers said the process had become smoother, and some called it "the most rewarding teaching I have done in years." What kept them going, they told us, was how the children reacted: students who had sat still and said nothing in normal classes woke up and joined in the moment the lesson touched on a story or song they knew from home.

We also looked at how different grade levels took to the linking. First and second graders reacted most strongly to fairy tales and songs, which fits what child-growth studies say about how younger children learn best through stories and through their senses. Third and fourth graders, by contrast, got the most out of riddles and proverbs, most likely because their sharper thinking skills let them enjoy the word tricks and the step-by-step logic these forms call for. This gap by grade tells us that good linking is not just about picking the right folk material; it also means matching the linking plan to where children are in their growth.

Folk songs, used in both music and native language classes, led to a 20% rise in how rich and how smooth students' speech became. The children learned word tricks - rhyme, beat, repeat patterns, sound echoes - not as dry terms from a textbook but as real parts of songs they liked to sing. Several teachers noticed that students who had been shy about speaking in front of the class grew much more at ease when they could lean on well-known song lines and story patterns [13].

All in all, the Table 1. linking method raised how active students were in class by about 35% compared to the old way of teaching [14]. But that number does not tell the whole story. In the usual lessons, only a few bold students did most of the talking. In linked lessons, joining in spread more evenly. Quiet children, especially those who found text-heavy lessons hard, often came to life during the art or music parts, and over time they carried that new boldness into the rest of the lesson too.

Table 1. How Well Linked Lessons Worked (in percent)

What We Measured	Test Group	Control Group
Interest in lessons	87%	64%
How well students learned	82%	65%

Creative work	79%	52%
How long they kept what they learned	85%	61%

Table 1 sums up our main findings. The biggest gap - 27 points - shows up in creative work, and that makes sense: children who spend part of every week drawing, singing, solving riddles, and acting out stories will build creative habits that a textbook-only class does not grow. The smallest gap sits in how well students learned (17 points). We read this with care. We can measure math and science facts fairly well; measuring how creative or how engaged a child is proves harder, and we suspect our numbers undercount the real gap.

The Table 2. cluster method calls for a closer look because it gave us the strongest results of all (+28%). In a cluster lesson, one folk item - say, a fairy tale - sat at the center, and everything else spun off from it. Students reading a tale would count its characters and events (math), describe the nature in the story (science), draw a scene (art), and learn a matching folk song (music) - all in one lesson block. The tight web of links seemed to create a kind of snowball effect: each subject backed up the others, and ideas piled up faster than they did in single-subject classes.

Table 2. Gains by Subject and Folk Genre

Link Type	Genre	Subject	Gain
Proverbs + Math	Proverbs	Math	+18%
Riddles + Science	Riddles	Science	+22%
Fairy Tales + Art	Fairy Tales	Art	+25%
Songs + Language	Folk Songs	Music + Language	+20%
Cluster (all at once)	All Genres	Several	+28%

We saw the cluster method at its best during a week-long unit on the fairy tale "The Fox and the Crane" (Tulki va turna). On day one, the reading teacher told the story and the class talked about what each character wanted and why the plan went wrong. On day two, the art teacher asked the children to draw both the fox's flat plate and the crane's tall jug, and through that drawing exercise she taught the difference between wide and narrow shapes. On day three, the math teacher used the same plates and jugs to run a hands-on lesson about volume: which holds more soup, a flat dish or a tall jar? On day four, the science teacher led a talk about real foxes and cranes - where they live, what they eat, how they look - using the story as the hook. And on day five, the music teacher brought in a folk song about clever animals and the class performed it together. By the end of that week, the children could retell the story, draw its key objects, measure real containers, name facts about two animals, and sing a song - all from a single fairy tale. No single-subject lesson could have done that.

We also stumbled on something we had not expected. Students in the test group, especially those from villages, felt a stronger tie to their own culture by the end of the study. Surveys we gave before and after the trial showed big shifts in how much these children knew about their heritage and how proud they felt of it - shifts that did not show up in the control group [15]. It looks like when folk oral works become part of daily school life - rather than something children hear only at a once-a-year holiday show - those works start acting as a living bridge to tradition instead of a relic behind glass.

There is a fairness angle here, too. In many Uzbek towns and villages, children come to school already full of folk lore: their grandparents tell stories, neighbors swap proverbs, seasonal songs go hand in hand with farm work. When the classroom ignores all of that, it quietly tells these children that what they know from home does not count as real school learning. Our linking method turns that message around. It says to students: what your family taught you is not outside of school - it is a real and useful part of it. Several parents told us at school events that their children had started going to their grandparents to ask

for more stories and songs to bring to class. To us, that was a sign that the linked lessons were not just drawing on cultural passing-down but actually making it stronger.

We should name one clear weak spot. When we talked to teachers, many of them said they liked the idea of linking subjects but felt they had not been trained to do it. Several pointed out that no one in their college years ever taught them how to plan a lesson that crosses subject lines, and that building linked lessons took a lot more prep time than regular ones. Anyone who wants to spread this method widely will need to deal with that training gap head on.

4. Conclusion

At its core, our study shows that folk oral works are too useful to keep inside one subject. When teachers let proverbs, riddles, fairy tales, and songs cross subject lines, the works do more than make lessons livelier - they change how children think about what they know. Instead of meeting facts sorted into boxes marked “math” or “science” or “reading,” students start to see ideas as linked, layered, and rooted in a culture they call their own.

Our data back this up clearly. On every count we tracked - interest, learning, creative work, keeping what they learned - the linked teaching beat the old way by 17 to 27 points. The cluster method, which ties several genres and subjects to one theme at the same time, worked best of all, with a 28% overall gain. These are not small numbers, and they held up in city schools, village schools, across all four grades, and with many different teachers.

It is worth asking why the results came out so strong. We think part of the answer lies in what folk oral works are. Unlike textbook content, which someone writes for a set teaching goal, folk materials took shape over hundreds of years under the pressure of real talk between real people: they had to be easy to recall, fun to share, and tied to daily life, or people would have dropped them long ago. A proverb that ten lines of families have chosen to repeat has already passed the toughest teaching test there is - the test of whether people freely choose to remember it and pass it on. When we bring such material into the classroom, we are working with content that human minds have, in a way, already fine-tuned over the ages.

Feelings play a part, too. Standard lessons aim to be clear and logical, which is worth a lot, but they do not always hit children in a way that makes them remember for a long time. Folk fairy tales, on the other hand, run on clash, surprise, humor, and a moral lesson at the end - the very things that brain science says drive long-lasting memory. When a child meets the idea of volume through the funny picture of two ram heads stuck in a pot, the laugh and the shock do teaching work that a plain textbook line cannot do.

We end with a few hands-on ideas for next steps. First, teacher training schools need to put cross-subject methods into their main courses - not as a side topic but as a core part of how they prepare primary school teachers. Second, the people who write textbooks should build in tasks that pair folk oral materials with work in other subjects. Third, each school should put together and keep up a handy set of folk oral materials, sorted by topic and by subject fit, so that teachers do not have to hunt for them from scratch. Fourth, the way we test students should grow to cover the skills that this method builds - creative thinking, linking ideas across subjects, knowing one’s own culture - because the tests we use now mostly miss these things. Fifth, school heads and local education offices should set up regular meet-ups where teachers who have tried linked teaching can share what worked and what did not with others who are just starting out. Teachers learn best from other teachers, and a network of shared know-how would speed up the spread of this method far more than any top-down order could.

We want to add one last thought about what this kind of teaching means for children’s sense of self. When a boy or girl in a village school hears a grandmother’s proverb come up in math class, or sees a fairy tale character appear on the art room wall,

something shifts inside. The child begins to feel that school and home are not two separate worlds. The knowledge that lives in the family - in the songs, in the stories, in the old sayings - turns out to be welcome at school, too. That feeling, which no test score can fully capture, may be the deepest gain of all.

There is still more to learn. We have not yet checked whether these gains last once students move to higher grades, and we have not looked at how digital tools might help or get in the way. But the main finding is plain: folk oral works, taught across subjects, make primary school learning both deeper and more lively. The tradition is already there, alive in the culture. All teachers need to do is open the classroom door and let it in.

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