

Subject Area: Social Sciences

Grade Level: K-12

Title of Approach: Interdisciplinary

Description of Interdisciplinary approach:

Education that is organized in such a way that it cuts across subject-matter lines, bringing together various aspects of the curriculum into meaningful association to focus upon broad areas of study. It views learning and teaching in a holistic way and reflects the real world, which is interactive (Gardner, Wissick, Schweder, Canter 2003).

Condition:

A fifth grade classroom in the Cuyahoga school District used co-teaching and inclusion over the course of one year. Colonial Life was used cross-curricular for every subject area as a thematic unit. The unit started with social studies and expanded to other subject areas from there (Jenkins 2005).

Condition:

Two middle schools in a growing rural area in Bell County utilized interdisciplinary teams. The people of the county were 84% white with a 30% poverty rate. The school's state scores were slightly above average. Teachers and administrators participated in the interdisciplinary teams. Out of 73 participants, 60 said the program was positive, and 42 out of 54 said that the approach met professional needs. It was also noted that the approach improved collaboration between professionals because they had mentors and were able to share ideas at content meetings (Bickmore, Bickmore, Hart 2005).

References:

Bickmore, Dana, L., Bickmore, Steven, T., Hart, Laurie, E. (2005, September).
Interdisciplinary Teaming as an Induction Practice. *NASSP Bulletin*, 89, 30-53.

Gardner, Emmett, J., Wissick, Cheryl, A., Schweder, Windy, Canter, Lorelee, S. (2003).
Enhancing Interdisciplinary Instruction in General and Special Education.
Remedial and Special Education, 24, 161-172.

Jenkins, Ruth, A. (2005). Interdisciplinary Instruction in the Inclusion Classroom.
Teaching Exceptional Children, 37, 42-48.

“How-To” Information:

Come up with ideas from anything or any resource around you (including peers, internet, and even students) or theme for a unit. Look at the various state standards and come up with activities that incorporate themselves into more than one standard or individual student interest. Then choose the strategies and activities.

Implications for Practice:

Pros

Kill 2 birds/one stone (2 or more standards), multitask, use with any student-gifted/disabled, focuses on many meaningful and learning skills, standardized scores went up, promotes social interaction, high completion rate of student work, flexibility, students with speech IEPs met the goals of vocabulary enrichment (Jenkins 2005) work on individual skills within a classroom setting, link student interest (Gardner 2003).

Cons

Time consuming, may require additional support or learning will be fragmented, in co-teaching, one teacher may be perceived as the leader and the other as the helper (Jenkins 2005), choose appropriate strategy for classroom(Gardner 2003)

Need to know info: Teacher would need to know the state standards and various activities and ideas for each subject area in order to incorporate into one thematic unit. Be careful

in the selection of activities as to not exclude a certain population (i.g.-hearing impaired, visually impaired).

What makes it work?

Ideas, various resources, input, creativity, evaluations, cooperation, flexibility

(Jenkins 2005).

Examples:

-For a unit about Colonial Life:

Science- food pyramid, hunting & farming

Oral Language- presenting reports

Writing- journals, portfolios, research, thank-you notes, invites

Art/ Music- early American songs, crafts, dancing, food

Reading- reading about the subject matter (Jenkins 2005)

-Centers for group work rotated over a few weeks

-Daily activities: work on the same activity each day

-Cross-curricular: a thematic unit (i.g. Oregon Trail)

-Basic Skills: the focus would be on what the area of difficulty for the student (all activities would incorporate this skill)

-Technology skills: students use the unit activities to develop technology skills (Gardner 2003)

Additional Links:

- <http://www.ed.sc.edu/caw/toolboxsource.html>
- Klein, Julie T., and William Newell, "Strategies for Using Interdisciplinary Resources," *Issues in Integrative Studies*, Vol. 20,2002, pp. 139-160.
- Kimmel, Stacey, "Interdisciplinary Information Searching: Moving Beyond Discipline-Based Resources," in J. Fiscella and S. Kimmel's *Interdisciplinary Education: A Guide to Resources*, New York: The College Board, 1999.
- www.proteacher.com
- www.teach-nology.com/teachers/lesson_plans/interdisciplinary
- www.eduplace.com/activity/index.html

- <http://communitydisc.westside66.org/HTML/unitsearch.html>

EIU Candidate Names:

Rachel Cory
Mike Leonard
Kim Newby
Alex Dorobiala