Concepts addressed in this course: *Major categories, advantages, and appropriate uses of instructional strategies: interdisciplinary Instruction*

Review lecture notes on integrated curriculum:

Interdisciplinary teaching:

- Traditional elementary classrooms divide instruction into categories (disciplines) such as "reading," "math," and "social studies." Interdisciplinary teaching involves any effort on the part of an instructor to design learning activities with products and activities to related to more than one discipline.

An “integrated” 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” (Shoemaker, 1989, p. 5).

Integrated curriculum:

- Linked subject areas to provide meaningful learning experiences that develop skill and knowledge, while leading to an understanding of conceptual relationships
- Unified view of common knowledge and creation of new knowledge
- Presents school subjects in the way that problems are encountered in the real world: prep for lifelong learning

Elements of integrated curriculum:

- Combination of subjects
- Emphasis on projects
- Sources go beyond textbook
- Relationships among concepts
- Thematic units as organizing principles
- Flexible schedules
- Flexible student groupings

What research on integrated curricula:

- Roots in Piaget, Dewey, Bruner and others: holistic view of learning

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• Brain organizes new knowledge based on connections to previous experiences and their meaning
• Brain actively seeks patterns: holistic experiences recalled quickly and easily, may resist learning segmented/isolated facts
• Diverse learning styles: need choices

Effects on attitude:

• Motivation for learning increased when students actively involved with “real” problems, planning their learning and making choices
• Decrease in behavior problems (bonus!)
• Students engaged in learning as they make connections across the curriculum and with the world outside of the classroom

Essential elements of integrated curriculum:

• Core skills and processes
• Curriculum strands and themes
• Major themes
• Questions
• Unit development
• Evaluation

Summary of research findings:

• Helps students apply skills
• Leads to faster retrieval of information
• Multiple perspectives = a more integrated knowledge base
• Encourages depth and breadth in learning
• Promotes positive attitudes in students
• Provides more quality time for curriculum exploration

Models of integration:

• Intradisciplinary approach (language arts)
• Fusion (character counts)
• Learning centers/parallel disciplines (patterns)
• Theme-based units (culminating activity)
• Project-based learning (student interest)
• Negotiating the curriculum (student questions)
Grading in an integrated approach:

- An integrated curriculum can then be broken down into subject areas when grading/assessing

Meeting standards with an integrated approach:

- A critical foundation for education lies in content standards
- Testing objectives
- When planning a lesson, think about ALL standards and think of which would fit with THIS lesson

Website:

What is Interdisciplinary/Cross-Curricular Teaching?