

"Toolkit" for Interdisciplinary Learning, Teaching, & Assessment

<http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/apc/public/repository/AP-Interdisciplinary-Teaching-and-Learning-Toolkit.pdf>

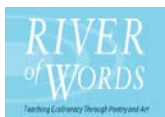
Benefits of Interdisciplinary Teaching and Learning

- Sharing ideas about your discipline and teaching with enthusiastic colleagues with a common goal
- Common learning goals are addressed by multiple teachers in different classes - more efficient way to teach, increased student success
- Seeing one's own discipline from a fresh and energizing perspective - builds excitement about teaching
- Opportunity to learn from students' sometimes unexpected interdisciplinary connections
- Students see teachers model continued learning, interest in their discipline and in those of others, collaborating with peers, making connections between what they know and new ideas, working from new and different perspectives, problem-solving, creativity, flexibility
- Real-world learning, not isolated educational experiences
- More opportunities for students to connect new learning with what they know and are interested in
- Provides more ways for students to learn and demonstrate their skills and understandings
- Highlights students strengths; builds confidence to overcome challenges learning new/difficult concepts
- Encourages students to become personally invested in their work (since they are given the privilege and responsibility of making choices about what and how they learn and demonstrate their learning)

Lessons Learned – Interdisciplinary Case Study:

- The simplest way to support interdisciplinary teaching and learning is to let students know it's an option.
- Teachers should encourage students to look for opportunities to get involved with interdisciplinary learning and assessment as it provides the student ownership over their own learning. Student-directed, authentic projects seem to motivate students more than the "one size fits all" interdisciplinary projects for the entire class.
- Interdisciplinary work can lead to more personal, relevant, and memorable learning experiences for students *and* teachers - teachers get excited about students' fresh ideas and new ways of demonstrating their understanding.
- Interdisciplinary teaching encourages teachers to identify and focus on "big ideas" so they can explain what's most important to learn (and how it can be demonstrated) to colleagues and students they collaborate with.
- Encouraging students to reach beyond the typical constraints of a single content area and engage in interdisciplinary learning fosters critical thinking, creativity, and communication skills but more importantly, it gets student excited about learning!

Interdisciplinary Opportunities in Environmental Science & Art



River of Words - The multidisciplinary, interactive curricula improves literacy, enhance investigation and critical thinking, and nurtures creativity. Their annual poetry and art contest is the largest in the world and inspires students to translate their observations into creative expression. <http://www.riverofwords.org/>



World Water Day - Students can design poster and banners to sponsor an event in their city. They also encourage photo journals from students to be submitted. <http://www.worldwaterday2011.org/>



Rachel Carson Sense of Wonder Contest - The U.S. EPA, Generations United, the Dance Exchange, National Center for Creative Aging, and the Rachel Carson Council, Inc., announce a poetry, essay, photo and dance contest. <http://www.epa.gov/aging/resources/thesenseofwonder/index.htm>



Endangered Species Day Art Contest - Children in grades K-12 are encouraged to submit artwork, posters and pictures to the Endangered Species Day Artwork Contest. The 2011's winner's work will be exhibited at Ogden Museum of Southern Art. They also have art lesson plans for teachers posted on their website. <http://www.stopextinction.org/esd.html>



The US Fish and Wildlife Service Duck Stamp Contest is for young people (grades K-12) to submit a stamp design in their own state contest. Winners from each state compete in National contest. Prizes include cash, and a visit to Washington, DC, for the National winner, a parent, and their art teacher. Free curriculum guide available upon request. <http://www.fws.gov/juniorduck/ArtContest.htm>



The American Museum of Natural History's Young Naturalist Awards program is a science-based competition inviting students (grades 7-12) to plan and conduct their own scientific investigations. Students will write about their investigations in essays that include artwork and/or photographs that help illustrate their findings. <http://www.amnh.org/nationalcenter/youngnaturalistawards/index.html>

Resources on Interdisciplinary Learning, Teaching, and Assessment:

About Interdisciplinary Learning "Revisiting a concept or skill from different perspectives deepens understanding, and can also make the curriculum more coherent and meaningful from the learner's point of view."

<http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/learningteachingandassessment/learningacrossthecurriculum/interdisciplinarylearning/about/contextforlearning.asp>

Core Strategy: Integrated Studies "Integrated studies combines curriculum from two or more disciplines, allowing students to see how ideas are connected. Teaching in such a contextual manner promotes collaboration, critical thinking, and knowledge retention." <http://www.edutopia.org/integrated-studies>

Kaleidoscopic Learning: An Overview of Integrated Studies "Interdisciplinary learning develops real-world, multifaceted knowledge." <http://www.edutopia.org/integrated-studies-interdisciplinary-learning-overview>

Why Integrate?: A Case for Collating the Curriculum "Sometimes, if you're really lucky, integrating curriculum can create the conditions in which students discover their passions. They find something they love doing so much that it compels them to persevere through all kinds of personal and academic challenges, to graduate from high school, and to go to college to pursue their dreams." <http://www.edutopia.org/integrated-authentic>

Classroom Guide: Top Ten Tips for Assessing Project-Based Learning "This classroom guide is intended to inspire and expand your thinking about effective assessment for project-based learning." <http://www.edutopia.org/10-tips-assessment-project-based-learning-resource-guide>