

What is cross-curricular learning?

"We each look on the world, its objects, patterns and experiences, with different eyes. Cross-curricular learning recognises these multiple viewpoints and seeks to build more knowledgeable, lasting and transferable understandings of the world around us"¹

"[A] conscious effort to apply knowledge, principles, and/or values to more than one academic discipline simultaneously. The disciplines may be related through a central theme, issue, problem, process, topic, or experience"²

Cross-curricular learning engages the Global Competencies by drawing on the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required to solve problems in collaborative environments. Planning for cross-curricular learning is a way to explicitly embed the Global Competencies in instruction.

Types of cross-curricular learning³

Parallel: same theme across different subject areas taught by multiple teachers (e.g. communities theme taught in different ways across Math class, Science class, Music class, and ELA class)

Infusion: many subject areas infused into main subject taught by a single teacher (e.g. Science teacher teaching about forests also brings in Music and ELA with songs and books about forests)

Multidisciplinary: common project across two or more subject areas taught by one or multiple teachers (e.g. school gardens project that brings together Health, Science, Social Studies, and Art classes)

Transdisciplinary: same theme across different subject areas that multiple teachers teach together in an integrated class (e.g. Health and Social Studies classes co-taught together addressing the theme of healthy communities, focused on civic and wellness domains of life in communities)

Tips for teaching cross-curricular

Start where you are! If this is a new approach, try small steps like using children's literature in Science or Health class.

Not every subject, all of the time – Not all topics can or should be taught in a fully integrated manner, and it is important that each subject area's disciplinary skills and concepts receive time and attention.

Intentionality – Cross-curricular learning works best when there is natural overlap between subject areas creating opportunities for rich learning, such as studying climate change at the intersection of Science, Health, Social Studies and Technology.

¹ Barnes, J. 2015. *An Introduction to Cross-Curricular Learning*. In *The Primary Curriculum: A Creative Approach* (2nd Ed), Eds. Patricia Driscoll, Andrew Lambirth, Judith Roden. SAGE) Retrieved on July 28, 2021 from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/274313611_An_Introduction_to_Cross-Curricular_Learning

² Jacobs, H. H. (1989). *Interdisciplinary Curriculum: Design and Implementation*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development

³ Kelly, Melissa. (2021). Cross-Curricular Connections in Instruction. Retrieved on July 30, 2021 from <https://www.thoughtco.com/cross-curricular-connections-7791>