

Typically demanding a spark of creativity coupled with experimentation, interdisciplinary teaching can be an ambitious approach to use in your classroom.

Fortunately, there are activities you can implement relatively easily that deliver research-backed benefits. These include:

- Improved Critical Thinking — Students should improve their analysis abilities by using approaches from different disciplines.
  - Better Bias Recognition — To solve a problem that demands an interdisciplinary approach, students must typically use information rooted in a range of perspectives. This can often challenge their pre-existing ideas to help them identify bias in themselves in others.
  - Preparation for Future Problems — Using skills and knowledge from different disciplines is practice for solving problems outside school walls.
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- What Is the Interdisciplinary Approach?

the teaching method is based on presenting issues, themes and problems that — to address or answer — require skills and knowledge from more than one subject. Depending on grade level and your area of expertise, this may involve working with a colleague in a different department to occasionally teach one another's class.

Regardless, the purpose of this pedagogy is to encourage students to make connections between academic disciplines.

For example, you could task your class with determining why a powerful historical figure made certain decisions. Completing this activity may require insights from politics, economics and sociology, as well as history.

On top of the aforementioned benefits, they will likely build informed and complete understandings of the topics they're studying.

- So, how can you teach using the interdisciplinary approach?

The instruction style typically takes the form of an entire unit, but there are also class-long exercises and short activities you can run. Examples and instructions are below.

1. News Analysis - Start your class with this minds-on exercise that provides real-world interdisciplinary problems. To launch the exercise, you must play a news clip that discusses a local, national or international topic. Then, give students a related question to solve either individually or in teams. For example, the clip can be about a store shutting down. Using skills and concepts from different subjects, ask students to determine an ideal new location for it. They can volunteer to present their solutions, answering questions from classmates.

2. **Historical Pen Pals** - Personalize history class — developing creative writing skills in the process — by dedicating time to this ongoing activity. Each student takes the role of a historical figure and writes to a classmate about events he or she faced. Drawing on resources such as videos and textbooks, the exercise allows the writer to process content from different and relevant subjects. Let's say a student takes the role of Galileo Galilei. He or she can write about the polymath's discoveries, building knowledge of math and other subjects in the process. Time: 45 Minutes
3. **Math Gym** - Combine math and science with physical education by delivering ongoing lessons that explain and explore certain motions. Let's say it's time to practice long jumps. You can briefly delve into physics and body mechanics, using a spring to illustrate the downward application of force. Then, students can exercise their math skills by estimating and measuring how far they jumped. These demonstrations and activities can also supplement lessons about lifting, throwing and other actions — potentially interesting students who don't enjoy gym.
4. **Class-Long Interdisciplinary Exercises - World Traveller.** Let students plan vacations, building research skills while touching on core subjects. You need to designate time for independent study in a library or computer room, as students work to create week-long travel itineraries to their ideal destinations. The product should, for example, include information about:
  - Landmarks and their historical significances
  - Popular foods, dishes and the predominant cuisine
  - Languages or dialects spoken in the area or country
  - Cultural events that take place in the area or country
  - This interdisciplinary activity lends itself to second-language classes. For example, students could write itineraries in French for a trip to Paris or Montréal. To wrap up the exercise, you can explore some destinations with your class using technology such as Google Earth.
5. **Leaning Tower** - Bolster the last activity — delving into more subjects — by asking students to examine one of Italy's famous landmarks. A mainstay interdisciplinary activity for some teachers, this exercise focuses on independent research into the Leaning Tower of Pisa. Specifically, it can involve:
  - Investigating the physics or structure of the tower, determining if or when it will fall
  - Exploring the tower's history and cultural significance to Pisa and Tuscany
  - Developing an itinerary for a trip to Pisa, similar to the last activity
  - Setting a budget for the trip
  - For lower grades, you can divide the activity into distinct exercises and allow students to work in groups. For higher grades, you can assign this as an in-class project for students to tackle either individually or in pairs. Time: One – Three Classes.

## 6. Incentives

Touch on business, philosophy and social studies with this introspective activity. The exercise starts by dividing your students into small groups and classroom into three stations. Each group has tokens totalling Rs.1,000, which they must choose to spend at the stations. Each station has a unique category of cards you've pre-made, representing a distinct incentive. An economic incentive could be to get faster transportation to school for Rs.150, whereas a social incentive could be to host a party for Rs.200. A moral incentive could be to make a charity donation for Rs.100. Once every group has spent Rs.1,000, tally the purchases to see which station sold the most incentives. This opens the door to two reflection exercises. First, as a class, discuss how each group spent its money. Second, ask each student to write about why he or she wanted specific incentives.

7. Field Study - Introduce new learning environments by using an outdoor field study as the basis for a short unit. Like any unit that uses an interdisciplinary approach, it must be rooted in an organizing centre — a defined focus or purpose, which will be further explained in this article's next section. For example, the field study can concentrate on finding local bugs and animals. Then, you can base your unit on exploring a specific theme related to wildlife. Students could:

- Read and evaluate relevant poetry
- Write and submit profiles about wildlife they spotted
- Watch and discuss documentaries about animals, such as Planet Earth
- Research and deliver presentations about how certain environments sustain wildlife
- To launch the in-class part of the unit, you can hold a class-wide discussion about how the field study connected with past lessons. Perfect for gratifying outdoorsy students.

8. All About Weather - Connect science with social studies by presenting a unit that explores the impact of weather. Many elementary science curricula have units about weather and atmosphere, which you can supplement by studying how they affect societies. For example, examine diverse regions and countries, looking into how climate influences labour, agriculture and cultural practices. Students can deliver products that depict how weather has historically shaped life and ecology in the area.

9. More than a "Just" Book - Make language arts class more memorable by examining a book's underlying contexts, running engaging exercises while reading it. Each book lends itself to unique interdisciplinary activities. Start by dissecting the setting. For example, if it takes place several centuries ago, students can recreate the era's scientific breakthroughs by making small windmills or simple telescopes. A book's theme can also draw on different subjects. Let's say you're reading George Orwell. You can set up learning stations that teach political ideologies. For a light-hearted approach, students can re-enact scenes from dialogue-heavy novels, putting themselves in characters' shoes. Who knew English class could be so versatile?

Time: Two Weeks or Longer.

10. Study-Free Test Preparation - Prepare your students for an upcoming exam or standardized test by exploring how to prepare aside from studying, giving them methods to use throughout their academic careers. Regardless of specific structure, this unit's lessons and activities should be based on one guiding question or organizing centre: "As well as studying, what are the best ways to prepare oneself for an upcoming test?" You can focus on stress, sleep, nutrition, active listening and other factors that influence performance. To culminate the unit, each student can give a research-backed presentation about a study-free preparation tactic. Time: One Week or Longer.