

Cross-Curricular teaching and learning

What is Cross-Curricular teaching?

A cross-curricular approach to teaching is characterised by sensitivity towards, and a synthesis of, knowledge, skills and understandings from various subject areas. These inform an enriched pedagogy that promotes an approach to learning which embraces and explores this wider sensitivity through various methods. Savage (2010)

Jonathan Barnes (2007) Stated that lessons are cross-curricular when the skills, knowledge and attitudes of a number of different disciplines are applied to a single learning experience, theme or idea.

Why is it important?

- Very often Cross-curricular approaches are associated with creative or, as Anna Craft calls it, 'Possibility' thinking (Craft, 2000).
- Cross-curricular teaching concentrates on the skills that are learnt more than the context they are learnt in. Therefore, allowing key transferable skills to be acquired and developed through varied media.
- Working in a cross-curricular manner can allow the children to develop team building and collaborative skills.

Opportunistic Cross-curricular learning.

In opportunistic cross-curricular learning the child leads. Planning is done in response to children's responses to a shared experience; the teacher may have only a vague subject expectation. During this approach the teacher's main role is facilitator, available to apply Vygotsky's 'scaffold' during the planned sessions.

Opportunistic CCL



Typically children and teacher share a powerful personal experience, such as a visit, visitor, or other powerfully presented stimulus.

The teacher will then ask or draw attention to particular area of interest of the children and draw out what the children want to learn. With drawing from the children's likes and interests, the intrinsic motivation of the children will be activated.

Before using an opportunistic approach, the practitioner should be mindful that, being child-led there is always unpredictability and the element of risk. A more experienced and creative teacher often feels more relaxed with this approach as they have the experience of most subject specific content.

Opportunistic teaching can be more challenging in regards to behaviour management, planning and preparation, and predicting what they children will want to learn. However, when facilitated adequately, the experiences that the children can gain will last a lifetime.

Donaldson's 3 cross-curricular responsibilities in Successful futures (2015)



Competence in literacy, including competence in the spoken word, syntax and spelling, is essential for learning across the curriculum. The key to developing command of these skills lies in a sound understanding of their essential components supported by appropriate teaching, learning and rich contexts within which they can be reinforced.



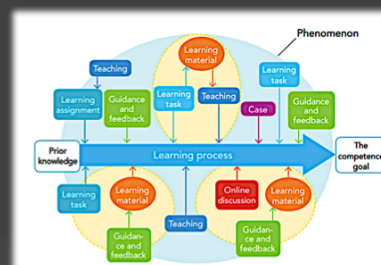
Numeracy, including arithmetical and data-handling skills, is deployed widely across the curriculum. Children and young people need regular opportunities to deepen their understanding of number and, as with literacy, to reinforce and use their numeracy skills in different contexts.



Digital competence plays an increasingly powerful role in the lives of children and young people, for communication, networking, information, leisure and entertainment as well as for an increasing range of transactions and educational applications. We should focus on pedagogy, deeper skill development, transferability and understanding.

Phenomenon Based Learning (PhenoBL)

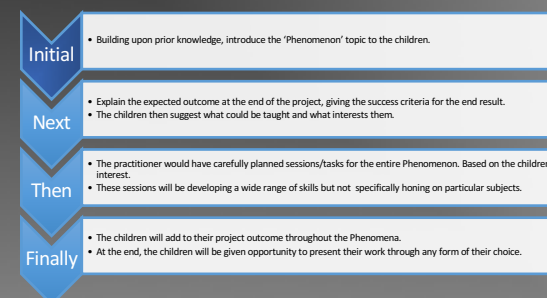
Schools in Finland have been progressing away from traditional school subjects and towards, what PISA Silander (2015) calls, Phenomenon Based Learning (PhenoBL). (Lord, 2017) At its best, phenomenon-based learning is problem-based learning,



Although PhenoBL is very beneficial for real-world learning, the planning aspects can be very challenging for teaching staff involved.

The diagram to the left shows how a typical learning process can develop through PhenoBL. Below you will find a step by step diagram of the basics of Phenomenon Based Learning.

"Holistic real-world phenomena provide the starting point for learning. The phenomena are studied as complete entities, in their real context, and the information and skills related to them are studied by crossing the boundaries between subjects". Silander (2015)



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Images from

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