

How Can I Become Involved in My Child's Interdisciplinary Learning?

Talk to your child about what they have been doing in school.

Think about how to make links in their learning at home so that they can see its relevance across different areas.

You could...

- link counting with using money and shopping or budgeting.
- link map skills (as simple as turning left or right) and planning a real-life route or journey. Timetables might link with this too!
- link the importance of accurate measurement and following instructions with DIY projects.
- link weighing and reading for information with cooking.
- link using technology to search for information with a real-life purpose, e.g. finding out about a holiday destination.

If you have any specific queries relating to interdisciplinary learning and would like to discuss these further, please contact the Head Teacher who will be happy to meet with you and answer any questions.



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What Is Interdisciplinary Learning?

Information for Parents and Carers

What Is Interdisciplinary Learning?

In Education Scotland's publication, Building the Curriculum 3 (2008), teachers are encouraged to plan for learning across areas of the curriculum and to connect different areas of learning. This is called interdisciplinary learning and is usually called IDL in schools.

What Are the Features of Interdisciplinary Learning?

Interdisciplinary learning...

- has a clear learning purpose.
- can be in the form of short or long-term projects, tasks or challenges.
- targets experiences and outcomes from two or more curriculum areas.
- ensures progression in pupils' skills as well as their knowledge and understanding.
- can provide opportunities for interest-based learning activities across stages.
- gives pupils opportunities to apply what they have learned in different ways and in new contexts.
- is motivating and meaningful for most learners.
- is sometimes also known as cross-curricular learning. There is no difference in the two terms.

How Do I Recognise Interdisciplinary Learning at My Child's School?

Effective interdisciplinary learning is most commonly approached in the following two ways:

In the first approach, learning is planned to develop awareness and understanding across curriculum areas. Pupils may develop their knowledge, their ways of working or their skills.

The second approach to interdisciplinary learning is more traditional in primary schools. Learning in different curriculum areas is used to explore a theme or topic. The pupils might work on a challenge, solve a problem or work towards a final project, e.g. a class presentation or show. This can be achieved by providing a learning context that is relevant to the pupils, the school and its community. For example, to promote ICT skills and creativity, children might use skills they have developed in technologies and art and design along with the knowledge developed from a study of their local community, to create informative and attractive tourism web pages or leaflets for their local tourist office.

Do Teachers and Schools Just Pick Any Interdisciplinary Learning to Work On?

All interdisciplinary learning is planned to meet the learners' needs. In interdisciplinary learning, pupils are also involved in planning their learning so that they can identify where their learning journey should take them.

It is also important for teachers and pupils to evaluate their learning following a period of study or the completion of a task so the next steps in learning can be identified.

Why Do We Have Interdisciplinary Learning?

Our world is interdisciplinary! Children need to be able to make connections and apply skills, knowledge and understanding across many areas in real life.

Interdisciplinary learning can provide a context for learning that is enjoyable and relevant. Pupils have a deeper understanding of important ideas and are more able to use their knowledge and skills in transferable ways.