

## **Making Math Cross Curricular**

How do teachers make elementary school math cross curricular? Although it seems like a straightforward task that can easily be accomplished, when you sit down and try to come up with creative and effective ways of doing this it is quite challenging. I have taken the time to develop and create some lesson plans (see lesson plans and creative projects) but I still feel that this is a significant challenge. Students spend such a significant portion on their school day focusing on math and English that it would be idea to incorporate some you and your world since minimal hours are dedicated to this subject area.

Unlike Language Arts where the curriculum outcomes are open-ended, the curriculum outcomes for Math are measurable and clearly defined. Although teachers can be extremely creative in how they approach a unit in mathematics it is much more challenging to impose creativity and still achieve the curricular outcomes. In Language Arts, writing skills and sight words are developed and mastered through practice, but in math significantly more instruction time is required. Frequently using manipulatives is one way of making math hands on, but this doesn't really incorporate any other subject areas. One of the article's I read for the annotation aspect of this summative assignment offers one way that learning about fractions can become cross curricular with science. In this article the authors use the different densities of liquids (water and oil) to illustrate fractions. The teacher fills one third of a beaker with the different substances to show that together they form one whole. In this lesson the students were then given the opportunity to do this experiment as well to gain a more thorough understanding of

the concept of a whole. Although interactive learning like this is awesome for students, teachers can feel restricted by the number of resources that are available to them at their school. It is easy to say to a teacher, that they just have to be creative and think outside the box but I think that is easier said than done.

Students spend the majority of their day working on either Math or English, one way that I have come up with incorporate the two. One this during my observation days was that students were struggling with skip counting (2's, 5's and 10's). Perhaps it would be valuable to have them write a creative story that involved skip counting in some day. For example students were asked to create a story about a party that was hosted and what happened when people arrived in groups of ten. Simple things like this would be an ideal way of making math less concrete and intimidating. Other alternatives that I have come up with to help me approach this issue have been developed into lesson plans. In the first lesson plan I created, the teacher gives small groups of students a challenge. The students will then work to solve their challenge, which is followed by the creation of a podcast to explain the process by which they completed their challenge. Another alternative to making math cross curricular is project based learning. In this project students develop a business (this works on their ability to count money, skip count, develop graphs etc) but students are also asked to create newspaper articles, posters etc to advertise the product that they are selling.

I genuinely fear being that boring teacher that merely hands out activity sheets everyday. I have put a lot of thought into coming up with innovative ways to make math fun for students but it is a real challenge. Additionally, I have read many

articles, searched on pinterest etc and though the possibilities are endless it is intimidating to think of all the prep time that is required to be successful in making make cross curricular and fun.