

ISAP - RESEARCH

RESEARCH:

Engaging students and helping them to develop knowledge, insights, problem solving skills, self-confidence, and a passion for learning are common goals that educators bring to the classroom.

Students who have completed their journey in PYP are well acquainted with all the five essential elements of knowledge, attributes, skills, concepts and attitudes with action being the learner outcome.

On observing we understood that as they move to the next grade level their energies and inquisitiveness in learning have to be sustained.

We identified that an interdisciplinary instruction and exploration promotes realization of these objectives through thematic teaching. Also interdisciplinary thematic teaching increases student learning and fosters advances in cognitive ability.

There are 6 elements of the educational process that lead to *significant learning* and each of these is a common feature of interdisciplinary forms of instruction.

- **Foundational Knowledge** – acquiring information and understanding ideas
- **Application** – acquiring an understanding of how and when to use skills
- **Integration** – the capacity to connect ideas
- **Human Dimension** - recognition of the social and personal implications of issues
- **Caring** – acknowledgment of the role of feelings, interests, and values
- **Learning *How-to-Learn*** – obtaining insights into the process of learning

Design Model for Developing Thematic Interdisciplinary Teaching Learning Process

Discovery: Once we discovered that interdisciplinary learning would help the students in sustaining their energies and inquisitiveness, we started brainstorming to redefine the teaching learning process and to raise the standards of the students' conceptual understanding.

Interpretation: Interdisciplinary teaching requires a thematic approach for the students to get a deep insight into the topics. This would help the students enhance their conceptual understanding and the knowledge gained in the process would be sustainable.

This type of thematic teaching with the help of technology and other resources would make the classroom learning environment lively and interactive. Also it would help the students to think critically and understand the interconnectedness of various disciplines and in the process apply to their daily life situations.

Ideation: To stimulate the minds of the young learners into understanding the big picture of interdisciplinary teaching we began to design the thematic units around English, Science and Social Science between the text book and other resources.

Nothing in this world is isolated and everything is interconnected . Educational experiences are more authentic and of greater value to students when the curricula reflects real life, which is multi-faceted rather than being compartmentalized into neat subject-matter packages. Hence we assimilated the contents of topics from English, Science and Social Sciences into four thematic units – *Systems, Dynamics & Equilibrium, Cycles and Forces & Energy* thus establishing interconnectedness and reflecting real life situations.

Once the students have understood the meaning of all the four themes, the learning environment would begin in the classroom by connecting them to the themes and reflecting in their daily life.

As this kind of interdisciplinary thematic teaching would stimulate the minds of the young learners intellectually, we called this module as Intellectually Stimulating Academic Programme (ISAP).

Experimentation: After thorough planning and brain storming sessions with all the teachers the plan of action was ready. The target group for this interdisciplinary theme teaching were the grade 7 & 8 students. The module has been implemented effectively with active participation of the team members.

While implementing we observed that this theme teaching is helping the students identify their own skills. They have become independent in thinking, it is stimulating the minds of student to come up with new ideas and enhancing their critical thinking and research skills. They started taking initiatives and began to connect to real life situations.

In the process they learnt to understand the big picture of learning Science, Social Sciences and English together and develop critical thinking skills through theme teaching.

A [questionnaire](#) was given to the parents about this programme to know what is working and what is not so as to improve on it further.

Evolution: Students in the age group of 11 to 13 years are very energetic and curious learners. This programme clicked very well and the students have started thinking critically and were coming out with big ideas and started connecting to real life situations.

The classroom interactive sessions with the help of technology is stimulating the minds of the young learners. The students have begun to connect their learning with the four themes and also understanding the interconnectedness of various disciplines.

The theme teaching learning was done by using various strategies and critical thinking tools individually and in groups. Gradually we started using group learning methods with cooperative learning as our learning spaces.

Through the Continuous Comprehensive Evaluation system we have continuous formative assessments in different forms to assess the students' learner outcomes.

With the expected outcomes from the students through this interdisciplinary thematic teaching, this model is very successful as it is enhancing the students' cognitive abilities.