

Cross-curricular Teaching SAMPLE

Children are naturally curious about the world around them. They want to know how nature works (natural science), how man's inventions function (technology), they are drawn to the exciting stories behind man's achievements and artistic creations (history/art), as well as the fascinating landscapes and customs of far away places (geography/social science). Therefore, it seems natural and appropriate for their foreign language classroom to provide opportunities for them to explore this world and to integrate the resulting knowledge and understanding with language learning.

Here are some other reasons for integrating content with language learning and some tips for making the most of the cross-curricular pages in *Our Discovery Island*:

- Young learners already bring an incredible amount of previous knowledge of the world to the language-learning classroom. Cross-curricular content lessons are a useful way of tapping into that knowledge and using it as a springboard for teaching new data, concepts and competences.

Tip 1: Start the lesson by inviting students to focus on the images on the page and ask a few warm-up questions, e.g., *What can you see on the page? What is the lesson about? What do you know about the topic? What else would you like to know?* Use the children's first language if necessary.

- What the learners hear or read about a topic can later provide realistic reasons for speaking and writing about it. The cross-curricular page in every unit of *Our Discovery Island* is an opportunity for children to listen, speak, read and write in order to understand and explore content that is interesting in its own right and appropriate to their age. In this way, we hope that each of the four skills will support and promote the development of the others more naturally and easily.

Tip 2: As the students do the activities in the lesson, highlight any new vocabulary relating to the topic and gather it in a simple diagram on the board. At the end of the lesson, invite the learners to copy the diagram in their notebooks for later reference.

- Cross-curricular lessons can lead to very motivating individual or small group projects. The Mini Projects in every cross-curricular lesson in *Our Discovery Island* are a chance for children to collaborate, think creatively and share what they know with their peers and family. From a simple poster with illustrations and single-word labels or captions, to more ambitious projects recorded on film or other digital media, projects can be a fabulous way for children to apply and personalize what they learn.

Tip 3: Invite students to read the instructions and help them visualize what the end product will be (a written list of physical exercises, possibly illustrated with drawings or photos, or a poster with pictures, captions and a short text

describing an animal from their country). Help students think about what to write, how to draft and edit and, finally, how to make it look nice (layout, design). Depending on the time available, allow students to do the project in class, or write a draft in class and complete the project at home.

- Mini projects can lead to research opportunities. Cross-curricular lessons are an ideal context for learners to look for information, and to be taught how to assess its relevance and the reliability of its source(s).

Tip 4: Help the children brainstorm sources of information for their mini project (the school library, the Internet, an "expert" from school, a relative or family friend). Help them understand that there are countless sources of information available but that not all of them are reliable. Teach them to gather—and check the relevance and reliability of—information. If they use the Internet, take the opportunity to teach them what search engines to use and why certain sources are more or less reliable than others.

- Cross-curricular lessons are a chance to develop useful competencies such as logical reasoning, critical thinking and problem solving. For this purpose, as from Level 3, the cross curricular lessons in *Our Discovery Island* include a Think! task. We hope these will help students think more deeply and effectively about the problems and situations they encounter every day.

Tip 5: Read the question or task aloud for the whole class and clarify meaning in students' first language, if necessary. Ask a few questions to help them understand what they have to do. Infuse the task with a sense of discovery by telling them that they will act as detectives to come up with as many possible answers as they can. Get students into pairs or small groups and give them a few minutes to complete the task. Invite pairs or groups to share their answers with the whole class.