

ADAPTING ACROSS DISCIPLINES: THE ART OF TEACHING BEYOND ONE'S EXPERTISE

by:

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Being adaptable has become a hallmark of successful teachers in the ever changing field of education. Curriculum changes, teacher shortages, and the need for interdisciplinary learning are just a few of the issues that schools face today, which frequently force teachers to broaden their areas of expertise. The situation of a science teacher instructing English is a powerful illustration of this flexibility. The finest teachers are those who can learn, adapt, and connect knowledge across disciplines to meet the requirements of their students. This may appear to be a mismatch of competence at first, but it actually reflects a deeper reality about teaching (Schleicher, 2020).

A more dynamic and diverse approach is gradually replacing the conventional perception of a teacher as an expert in a single subject. In addition to subject-matter expertise, modern educators are expected to be technologically literate, culturally sensitive, and have transferable teaching abilities. Therefore, a teacher's efficacy is now determined by their capacity to modify their pedagogy for a variety of circumstances rather than only their subject-matter competence (Trilling & Fadel, 2021). Systemic and societal changes are major factors driving this transformation in the teaching profession.

Although teaching science and English may seem dissimilar, there are important parallels between their educational underpinnings. Both place a strong emphasis on investigation, reasoning supported by facts, and creating meaning from data. By promoting arguments in essays or critical readings of texts that are supported by evidence, a scientific teacher who has been trained to lead students via observation, investigation, and analysis can apply these same ideas to teaching English. This

interdisciplinary method simultaneously develops students' communication and thinking capabilities (Bautista & Ortega-Ruíz, 2022). Teachers who teach subjects outside of their areas of expertise develop innovative strategies for utilizing their abilities. A science teacher used to structured problem-solving, for example, might create English exercises that assist students in methodically structuring their ideas. Lessons can include using logical frameworks to analyze literary themes or creating lab report-style essays to practice language clarity and precision. Not only do these innovative pedagogical bridges improve student learning, but they also make teaching more interesting for the teacher (Marzano & Heflebower, 2021).

It takes a growth attitude, an openness to learning, and an acceptance of ambiguity to teach outside of one's field of competence. Dweck's (2020) theory states that people are more likely to succeed in difficult circumstances if they think their skills can be improved with work and education. When educators take on teaching tasks that are outside of their comfort zones, they are exemplifying this idea. Teachers become lifelong learners as a result of their professional flexibility. They attend trainings, talk to coworkers, read new materials, and try out different tactics. The rigorous yet transforming process cultivates empathy for pupils who also face challenges with new material. Teachers grow more understanding and helpful in teaching their own students when they gain direct experience with the difficulties of learning anything new (Brookfield, 2020).

Although it is admirable, teachers' flexibility should not be taken for granted. Institutions need to understand that teaching outside of one's area of expertise requires more work, planning, and occasionally anxiety. By giving these educators access to resources, professional development opportunities, and mentorship, school administrators play a critical role in their support (Day & Gu, 2020). Teachers work at their best when they feel respected, trusted, and supported, according to OECD research from 2021. Flexible teaching assignments might result in fatigue or a decrease in self-efficacy if they are not properly supervised. Peer cooperation, mentoring programs, and

opportunities for ongoing education can lessen these difficulties and turn adaptability into empowerment. For instance, schools can pair a former science teacher who is now teaching English with a more seasoned language instructor to discuss classroom management techniques, co-plan lessons, and exchange evaluation rubrics. Acknowledgment is also important. Teachers should be commended for their bravery and dedication to learning when they take on responsibilities outside of their areas of competence. Their experiences provide as excellent examples of professional tenacity and commitment to student development, two traits that are essential to high-quality education (Darling-Hammond & Hyler, 2020).

Teaching across disciplines has significant educational advantages beyond necessity. It enables educators to demonstrate how information is interrelated, assisting pupils in understanding how history and technology, art and mathematics, or language and science are interconnected. Writing scientific essays, interpreting data through narrative forms, and using persuasive writing to argue environmental issues are all ways that a flexible teacher may help students develop their literacy and scientific understanding (Trilling & Fadel, 2021). This kind of interdisciplinary learning fits perfectly with the framework of education in the twenty-first century, when topic boundaries are becoming more hazy. Critical thinking and communication are increasingly valued more by employers and academic institutions than rote memorization or specialized training.

Teaching outside of one's area of expertise has advantages, but there are drawbacks as well. Teachers may struggle to integrate lessons with curriculum standards, feel insecure about their own abilities, and lack confidence in their subject matter. Concerns regarding credibility among coworkers or pupils could also exist (Day & Gu, 2020). Teachers can use a variety of tactics to get beyond these challenges. First, by co-teaching or consulting with subject-matter experts, they can embrace a collaborative mindset. Second, they can share best practices and obtain up-to-date teaching resources

through professional learning groups and online platforms. Lastly, rather than attempting to mimic subject matter experts, educators can use their original disciplinary lens to create courses that are distinctive and significant (Bautista & Ortega-Ruíz, 2022). These initiatives are strengthened by supportive administration and a healthy school climate. Teachers are more self-assured and driven when administrators see flexibility as a strength rather than a temporary fix. Teachers' preparedness for such assignments can be further improved by attending professional development workshops that emphasize curricular integration, interdisciplinary instruction, and adaptable pedagogy (Schleicher, 2020).

Fundamentally, teaching English is an act of devotion to the teaching profession rather than a substitute. It expresses the conviction that education should continue throughout a teacher's career rather than ending with their degree or area of expertise. This flexibility shows resilience and professional integrity, two traits that are crucial during periods of educational transformation (Darling-Hammond, 2021). We are reminded that education is about developing human potential rather than just imparting knowledge by educators who take on new subjects. They provide an example of flexibility, inquiry, and humility, exemplifying what it means to be a transformative educator. By doing this, they demonstrate to pupils that true learning occurs when we challenge our preconceived notions and have the courage to develop (Brookfield, 2020).

Teachers' adaptability is an asset, not a weakness. It demonstrates how teaching is both an art and a science, a profession that calls for not only knowledge but also bravery, heart, and a lifelong love of learning. Adaptable educators are essential to advancement in an educational environment that requires creativity and resiliency. Their cross-disciplinary journey demonstrates educators' unending potential for learning, leadership, and inspiration in addition to their professional adaptability.

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