

From Local Ag Teachers:



Thoughts in Passing



INTERGRATION
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The word "integration" is a very common word in the United States today. The term integration is normally used when law-makers and

educators are striving to achieve racial balance in our public schools. This article is going to be devoted to integration; however, it will not be used in the same context as law-makers usually view it. Instead, I will deal with integration as

a means of relating vocational and academic education.

The human race portrays an inherent instinct to protect whatever we value as our territory or property. This protectiveness, regretfully, is many times carried over to the field of education, and often times it leads to a serious breakdown in communications among educators. For years, academic and vocational educators alike have been promoting the idea of teaching their own separate areas of subject matter - ie Math, Science, English, Animal Science, Soil Chemistry, Mechanics, etc. without ever trying to correlate the two curriculums. I would like to see a stronger effort among academic and vocational educators to coordinate their subject units and make both curriculums more meaningful to students. Many times when students see the relationship of vocational and academic subjects they respond by putting forth the effort required to them to accomplish the task, whether it be a math problem or mastering a skill in mechanics. Examples of integrating subjects would be: 1) Math - a proper reading of rules in the academic area in order to apply their use in the vocational area; b. figuring board feet in the academic area to use in a vocational setting; c. the study of ledger entries in the academic area to aid students in project book programs in the vocational area. 2) Science - a. collecting and identifying foliage of trees agricultural field crops, and various weeds customarily found around the home, affording the vocational

instructor more time to spend on values and uses of these plants. 3) English - a. Explanation and spelling of various terms used in vocational areas - such as TDN, concentrate, roughage, environment, habitat, etc; b. writing of appreciation letters to business establishments where vocational students have visited; c. writing of essays dealing with individual student interest areas rather than having all students writing about a particular subject. 4) Animal Science - a. studying the life cycle of bees, cattle, or other forms of livestock rather than the drosophila fly or the spaghnum moss. 5) Soil Chemistry - a. discussing and studying soil nutrients and abbreviations, allowing more time to deal with specific needs of specific plants.

I am the Agriculture teacher at the Hinkletown Alternative School where many of the aforementioned, and some unmentioned, methods of integrating were put to practice in the 74-75 school year. Integration of Academic and Vocational Education is a very important part of the philosophy at the Alternative School, and perhaps this is why it has been successful. The academic teachers at this school have demonstrated that with cooperation and initiative this philosophy of integration can be implemented and proven successful. Integration of subjects at the Alternative School has not been limited to Academic and Vocational, we have also coordinated several very successful projects by integrating vocational with vocational -

ie. Agriculture and Homemaking, Carpentry and Nursing, and Agriculture and Homemaking, was the slaughtering, packaging, and freezing of a lamb. Many more examples could be cited, however, I feel the point has been made that integration can be a very successful part of the philosophy of education in our public school system.

Many opponents of this article will say that the academic teacher knows very little about vocational subject matter, therefore, why put forth the effort. If you re-read the examples cited for integration, you will see that all are very basic and require skills that many academic teachers possess. I feel that with the vocational and academic teachers cooperating their efforts gainful progress can be made toward a more compatible working relationship between academic and vocational educators.

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