



Chapter 5

IMPLEMENTING CURRICULUM INTEGRATION

Shannon Whalen, Ed.D.

*College of Mount Saint Vincent
Department of Health Education
and
Adelphi University
Department of Health Studies*



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Integration generally refers to any putting together or relating of things, either conceptually or organizationally (Shoemaker, 1991; Jacobs, 1989; James & Adams; 1998). Integration in the field of education is hardly a new idea; it can be traced back as far as Plato. Many educators from the 1920's to the 1990's have also advocated curriculum integration. Fifty years ago, Ralph Tyler, a well-known curriculum theorist, urged schools to integrate subject areas. John Dewey also supported this concept (Gardner & Boix-Maxilla, 1994; Mourad, 1993; Vars, 1991). Since the mid-1960's, when the concept of curriculum integration gained widespread support, educators have advocated for an integrated curriculum to "meet the needs" of adolescent learners. Today, in fact, the push is strongest where junior high schools are transforming into middle schools (Beane, 1991; Gardner & Boix-Maxilla, 1994).

According to Heidi Hayes Jacobs, a leading expert in the field, curriculum integration is defined as "...a knowledge view and curriculum approach that consciously applies methodology and language from more than one discipline to examine a central theme, issue, problem, topic or experience." (1989, p 8). Jacobs states the traditional curriculum divides learning into separate disciplines and subjects, while an interdisciplinary curriculum stresses linkages among the disciplines. Beginning with the concept of flight as an organizing theme, Jacobs illustrates how teachers from various disciplines can contribute to students' knowledge and understanding. In social studies, for example, students can study the history of flight; in science, they can learn principles of aerodynamics as they apply to birds, animals, and machines; and in the arts, they can learn about Leonardo Da Vinci's designs (1989).

Key Concepts

Promoting Positive Health Messages

Curriculum integration is a tool vital to health educators. Health educators are faced with students who are at risk for a myriad of negative health behaviors. At the same time, health educators find themselves with fewer contact hours with each student. With an increasing emphasis on raising educational learning standards, some states are contemplating the elimination of all health education in order to provide extra contact hours in academic subjects such as mathematics, foreign languages, and natural sciences. In a society where students are constantly exposed to negative health messages, it is imperative that positive health messages are supported in every way possible.

In New York State, for example, students are required to complete twenty weeks of health education in the middle/junior high school, and twenty weeks of health educa-



tion in senior high school. In a worst-case scenario, it is possible for a student to receive health education in sixth grade and receive no further health education until twelfth grade. Realistically, it is not possible for this limited exposure to health education to counteract all the negative health messages students are exposed to on a daily basis and over their lifetime. Every time a child turns on the television, listens to the radio, watches a movie, reads a magazine or sees a billboard, he/she is exposed to negative health messages. In order to have any effect on health behavior, positive health messages must be provided to children in an equally repetitive manner. Curriculum integration affords educators that opportunity.

Advocating for Healthy Behaviors

While health educators recognize the need for integration of health education into other subject areas, teachers from other disciplines may not have the time, knowledge, training, or resources to integrate health education topics in their teaching. The health educator should be a strong advocate for integration of health information into other subject areas. Health educators need excellent team building and collaborative skills to achieve success in this endeavor (Cook & Martinello, 1994; James & Adams, 1998). All teachers are faced with time constraints that may prevent them from completing their curriculum by the end of the year. In addition, many teachers believe that their discipline is the most important and the introduction of additional topics will reduce the time available for their subject matter instruction. Few teachers will appreciate additional requirements to complete in their classroom if support and assistance are not available.

Health educators can advocate for integration of health education into other subjects while, at the same time, reducing the burden on other teachers as much as possible. While the health educator may not be able to teach a health lesson for another subject teacher, he/she can provide assistance to other teachers in tailoring health education material to subjects that are already being taught. Some teachers may be reluctant to engage in curriculum integration because they believe it takes away valuable time from the subject they teach. If health educators can demonstrate that integrating health education material does not add an extra burden, but only changes the way an issue is framed, they may be successful in working with other teachers to integrate health into different disciplines (Holcombe & Denk, 1993; James & Adams, 1998; Jacobs, 1989).

Creating Opportunities for Promoting Healthy Behaviors

Teachers can be encouraged to integrate health education material into their subject areas through the national health education days, weeks, and months; for example, breast cancer awareness month is in October. The health teacher can prepare materials on breast cancer for chairpeople or teachers in each discipline. The health teacher could send the materials along with a note, alerting the other teachers of the significance of this month, and some suggestions they may want to consider for introducing the issue in their class. Further, the health teacher could give suggestions as to how the topic could be integrated into different subject areas and make him/herself available for consultation or questions.

The benefit of using the national health observances is that, oftentimes, free materials are available from corresponding agencies and organizations. In relation to October as Breast Cancer Awareness Month, the American Cancer Society provides free



videos, pamphlets, and posters to those who commit to promoting the breast cancer prevention message. Many agencies make a point to do this when a health observance day is related to their mission. If the health teacher takes the time to obtain and disseminate the materials, this may also promote curriculum integration. Teachers always appreciate free materials, and these materials may prompt them to cover the issue.

The United States Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (ODPHP) established the National Health Information Center (NHIC) in 1979. Each year the NHIC lists the updated national health observances. The health observances for the year 2000 are available at: <http://nhic-nt.health.org/Pubs/2000healthobserv/nho.htm>. Educators can use this site to identify health issues that are relevant to the students in their school and the dates of the observances of those health issues. The site provides links to the home pages of the participating agencies and organizations. These agencies and organizations frequently provide free materials to school systems.

Providing Leadership for Curriculum Integration

Health educators can promote the integration of health information into other subjects by offering to integrate other subject matter into the health class. Through this collaborative approach to curriculum integration, the health teacher provides a positive environment that may motivate other teachers to integrate health-related material into their curriculum (Holcombe & Denk, 1993; James & Adams, 1998; Jacobs, 1989). For example, if the English or language arts teacher follows a certain format for grading writing assignments, the health teacher could adopt the same format for writing assignments in health class. If the math teacher is working on certain skills, such as percentages, the health teacher could utilize those skills to calculate the percentage of fat in a serving of food or calculate disease rates in a population. If the social studies teacher is teaching about the Panama Canal, the health teacher could discuss infectious diseases and how disease influences major world events.

By demonstrating how curriculum integration can be effective, the health teacher is leading by example. Once teachers from other disciplines observe the success of the integration of their subject matter into health, they may be more open to integrate health content area into their curricula (Beane, 1991; Jacobs, 1989; Palmer, 1991).

Working with School Teams

Team teaching is an emerging and growing concept in education that can provide support for curriculum integration. School districts that promote team teaching frequently provide common planning or “prep” periods to teachers who teach similar student populations. These common periods enable teachers to meet to plan instructional activities, discuss student progress, or identify any problems across disciplines. Teachers can use some time during these periods to plan integrated curriculum rather than devoting the entire period to scheduling and grading students’ work.

Gaining Support

Developing interdisciplinary teaching and learning is not easy, and these skills can not be acquired overnight. Some teachers, even after considerable staff development and training, will find it difficult “letting go of old beliefs” (Shoemaker, 1991). Some teachers will continue to believe that their subject should not be integrated, and some teachers will continue to assert that student learning should always build from basic to



more complex concepts, rather than across disciplines (Gardner & Boix-Maxilla, 1994; Jacobs, 1989; Shoemaker, 1991). The health teacher will find it difficult to change those beliefs. In these circumstances, the health teacher may wish to focus more time and energy on working with those teachers who are more open and supportive of curriculum integration.

A Note of Caution. Curriculum integration initiatives are not intended to take the place of a planned, sequential, developmentally appropriate, comprehensive health education program. It is essential that trained health educators be allotted specific course scheduling and intact classes in order to teach health education curricula and learning standards mandated by New York State. Curriculum integration is not meant to be a substitute for health education class but a way to supplement and reinforce the instruction.

Skills Needed by Future Health Educators

Graduates from health education teacher preparation programs should be able to:

1. Brainstorm creative ways that health education topic areas can fit into different subject areas.
2. Develop the advocacy skills necessary to advocate for integration of health knowledge and skills into other disciplines.
3. Create materials appropriate for dissemination to teachers of other disciplines.
4. Act as a resource person in the school and provide health knowledge to those teachers willing to integrate their curriculum, informally and/or in training workshops.
5. Use national health days, weeks and months to support the concept of curriculum integration.

Learning Experience

To help students acquire the knowledge and skills to for integration of health topics with other subject and content areas, a curriculum integration learning experience is provided at the end of this chapter.

Assessment of Curriculum Integration Skills

When writing, teaching, and submitting health education lesson plans, teacher candidates should be required to include a curriculum integration section where they list ideas for integration of their health subject area into other disciplines.



Curriculum Integration Ideas

The following are ideas for integrating health subject areas into different disciplines.

Alcohol

- *Arts Education* - Create a counter-advertisement for a glamorous alcohol advertisement.
- *Computers* - Find the most current figures on alcohol-related deaths and arrests.
- *English* - Write poems about how the use of alcohol affects the family and society.
- *Foreign Languages* - How does alcohol use in this culture differ from alcohol use in your own culture? Discuss the differences.
- *Math* - Calculate the proof in different types of alcohol. Discuss how alcohol changes blood alcohol content (BAC) and calculate how much time it would take for BAC to return to normal levels after drinking different amounts of alcohol.
- *Physical Education* - Discuss how alcohol, steroids and stimulants affect athletic performance. Discuss other drug use in athletics, such as steroids and stimulants.
- *Science* - Study the effects of alcohol on the body. Research and write about how alcohol affects the body systems.
- *Social Studies* - Research current laws about alcohol. Discuss and propose new laws that could be made.

Diseases and Disorders

- *Arts Education* - Create get-well cards for children in the hospital.
- *Computers* - Use the Internet to research and peer teach about a specific disease.
- *English* - Write a letter to medical associations and request information about a specific disease. Write a research report about a specific disease.
- *Foreign Languages* - What are the diseases or disorders most prevalent among the people in the foreign country? Does that culture have any medical practices different from those in this country?
- *Math* - Calculate the percentage of the population that has certain diseases and how much money is spent on hospitalization and treatment of people with a disease such as lung cancer.
- *Physical Education* - Discuss how exercise can prevent or delay many of the diseases and disorders in our society.
- *Science* - Study the latest medical treatments, transplants, and cures for diseases.
- *Social Studies* - How has medicine changed over time in this country? What are the medical, folk, and spiritual practices of other cultures?

Environmental Health

- *Arts Education* - Make recycled paper products to draw on for this class. Make garbage collages.



- **Computers** - Locate environmental action groups on the Web and discover what actions are being taken around the world to protect the environment.
- **English** - Read stories and books, such as *A Civil Action* or *Silent Spring*, that relate to environmental health. Write a book report.
- **Foreign Languages** - Study the environment of the foreign culture and compare it to the U.S. Are they ahead of us or behind us in relation to preserving the environment?
- **Math** - Calculate water or electricity usage for your town. Determine how much garbage you will have created in your lifetime.
- **Physical Education** - Complete a unit on outdoor education and discuss environmental etiquette. Volunteer to help clean up a local park or river.
- **Science** - Study the effects of garbage, pesticides, acid rain, and noise pollution on the environment.
- **Social Studies** - Study how other countries deal with waste and compare their solutions to those of the United States. How did our country deal with garbage in the past?

HIV/AIDS

- **Arts Education** - Create quilt squares in acknowledgement for those who have passed away from HIV/AIDS.
- **Computers** - Use the Internet to research the most current statistics and information about HIV/AIDS. Assign each student a section to research and write a class paper about the virus.
- **English** - Write a critique or a film review of a movie about HIV/AIDS, such as *Philadelphia* or *And The Band Played On*.
- **Foreign Languages** - What is the status of HIV/AIDS in the foreign country? Is it as serious as in the U.S.?
- **Math** - Calculate how many people may have HIV in ten or twenty years and the cost of the drugs for a week, month, and year.
- **Physical Education** - Discuss how HIV will affect energy levels. Discuss the transmission of the disease during athletic events. Review safety precautions.
- **Science** - Study the effects of HIV on the body. Study the research efforts for treatment and a cure for HIV. Discuss the transmission of the disease.
- **Social Studies** - What are the laws about HIV reporting and testing? What are some of the lawsuits currently taking place regarding discrimination against HIV and purposeful transmission of HIV? Should laws be changed or created?

Nutrition

- **Arts Education** - Draw or paint pictures of healthy foods to decorate the cafeteria. Design food advertisements that would advertise the "truth" about junk food.
- **Computers** - Use the Internet to research a paper about nutrition. Find healthful recipes on-line.



- **English** - Keep a daily food diary; write about your feelings when you eat. Write a cookbook for healthy foods. Write a letter to the school cafeteria service or the Board of Education requesting healthier food options.
- **Foreign Languages** - Study the food choices of the culture. Create the favorite meals of the culture. Have a meal where English is not spoken. Have students learn the terms for fork, spoon, and “pass the salt” in the new language.
- **Math** - Calculate daily caloric intake and percentage of daily intake from each of the nutrients.
- **Physical Education** - Discuss how exercise can eliminate the need for strict dieting. Calculate how much exercise is needed to burn a specific number of calories.
- **Science** - Do an experiment to determine the difference in calories between a hamburger cooked at home and a Big Mac, or between different foods. Do an experiment to determine which foods contain which vitamins and/or minerals.
- **Social Studies** - Study the differences in eating habits among different cultures. Discuss the factors that determine food choice. Study the history of agriculture in our country.

Physical Activity

- **Arts Education** - Design a pair of sneakers or some other type of athletic gear.
- **Computers** - How has the development of the computer and other technology contributed to our unhealthy culture? What exercises can a person do if he/she is stuck at a desk and/or computer all day?
- **English** - Write a paper about the benefits of exercise. Write a newspaper story about a local team or another type of athletic event.
- **Foreign Languages** - What are the exercise habits of the people in that culture? What are their favorite leisure time activities? What are the cultural dances?
- **Math** - Calculate and compare how many calories are burned in different types of exercise - swimming, running, cycling, walking, playing football.
- **Physical Education** - Try different types of exercise. Compare team sports to lifelong sports, aerobic to anaerobic exercise.
- **Science** - Study the effects of exercise on the body.
- **Social Studies** - Study why it is necessary for our culture to make time for exercise. How has society changed over time? What historical developments have occurred?

Sex Education/Family Life Education

- **Arts Education** - Create posters or advertisements warning about fetal alcohol syndrome or child abuse.
- **Computers** - Find the current rates of teen pregnancy, contraception use, and abortion. Make graphs and charts of these rates over time using computer technology.
- **English** - Write a story about how a person’s life changed when she got pregnant. Reply to fictional “Dear Abby” letters related to sexuality choices for teens.
- **Foreign Languages** - Discuss and compare family life in the other culture to that in



the U.S. What are the differences in average number of children, age of marriage, dating practices?

- **Math** - What is the cost of having a baby? How much do diapers, doctors' visits, and other items cost? What are the costs per week, month, and year?
- **Physical Education** - Discuss exercise during pregnancy. Encourage team or intramural involvement to promote self worth and prevent early sexual activity.
- **Science** - Study the process of pregnancy. How does the fetus grow and change over the three trimesters? What changes occur in the woman's body?
- **Social Studies** - What is the average age of marriage in different cultures? How has the age of marriage changed in our culture?

Conclusion

Curriculum integration is a vital tool that helps health educators promote positive health messages for both students and staff in a school. Students benefit by seeing connections across curriculum areas, and their learning becomes more meaningful and related to real life as they comprehend key relationships among subjects. The following handouts will further assist preparation of teacher candidates who are knowledgeable about curriculum integration.

Handout 5-1 provides a learning experience for teaching teacher candidates how to integrate health education into other subject areas.

Handout 5-2 is a definition of curriculum integration. This handout has also been provided as a transparency for use in the classroom.

Handout 5-3 identifies six important considerations as a rationale for curriculum integration efforts in health education.

Handout 5-4 offers five strategies for implementing curriculum integration in a school setting. This handout has also been provided as a transparency for use in the classroom.

Handout 5-5 is a sample graphic organizer for a curriculum integration activity using smoking/tobacco as the topic.

Handout 5-6 is a template of the graphic organizer that can be used for any selected topic. This handout has also been provided as a transparency for use in the classroom.



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Curriculum Integration Learning Experience

Teaching Teacher Candidates How to Integrate Health Education into Other Subject Areas

Learning Content

Since twenty weeks of health education is not enough contact time with students, health teachers must help promote curriculum integration. They can assist teachers from other disciplines to incorporate health education into their subject areas. Health teachers can improve the likelihood of other teachers integrating health education if the health teachers make it easier by coming up with the integration ideas. The purpose of this learning experience is to allow teacher candidates to think about how health education materials can be integrated into other subject areas.

Procedure

Teacher - The teacher should begin the learning experience with an introduction of the concept of curriculum integration and the need for integration of health information into other subject areas. The teacher should then put up the sample overhead (Handout 5-5) with ideas for curriculum integration related to tobacco and explain to the class that they will work in groups to brainstorm about curriculum integration ideas for a different health topic area. Students should be broken up into groups and be given a health issue to brainstorm about. The teacher should pass around copies of the graphic organizer (Handout 5-6) for students to record their answers.

Students - Students will work together to generate ideas on how a particular health issue can be integrated into the subject areas. The groups can record their answers on the graphic organizer. Once the designated time (ten minutes) is over, each group can share its responses with the large group.

Note: The teacher can instruct each group to work on integration of the same or different health topics.

Instructional/Environmental Modifications

Ability - The small group atmosphere allows for a wide range of ability, but its size can be modified to avoid chaos. Students can also work alone.

Room changes - Once the students are assigned to small groups, the tables and/or desks should be arranged in circles so they can work together. If possible, desks and chairs should be arranged in circles prior to the class.

Time Required

Planning - Photocopy the graphic organizer for each small group or for each student. Use the overhead transparency of the sample graphic organizer (Handout 5-5).



Implementation - Allow twenty to thirty minutes, depending on how many students are in the class.

Assessment - This activity allows the professor to make an informal assessment of student understanding as the small groups are working and as they report to the large group. By walking around the classroom and observing the small groups working, the professor can also clear up any misunderstandings.

Resources

- Copies of the graphic organizer (Handout 5-6).
- Overhead transparency of the sample graphic organizer (Handout 5-5).
- Overhead transparency machine and screen.

Assessment Tools and Techniques

Student participation is the only assessment for this activity. However, if students are required to submit lesson plans, they can be assessed for understanding of curriculum integration by requiring them to add a section on curriculum integration to each lesson plan.

Student Work

A graphic organizer has been attached as an example.

Reflection

This is an interactive activity that most students enjoy. The results are not graded; there are, therefore, no right or wrong answers. This usually creates a relaxed atmosphere. The small group concept allows students who may have difficulty with this activity to get help from students who have an easier time brainstorming ideas.

This is usually the first time students have thought about having other teachers teach about health information. Although groups may have trouble generating ideas for each of the indicated subject areas, at least one group usually gets an idea. When the small groups report back to the whole class, students can be encouraged to write down ideas that they missed.

Students should be informed that part of curriculum integration is subject knowledge of other disciplines. Teacher candidates for health education should be advised to take interest in the curriculum of other disciplines. They should also be advised that curriculum integration may not be a concept that is accepted by all teachers and staff in a school. Health teachers should practice their team building and collaborative skills when attempting to disseminate curriculum integration ideas to other teachers, and begin their efforts with teachers who are supportive of curriculum integration initiatives. They should also know that if they ask others to incorporate health ideas, they may be asked to incorporate material in return.



Definition of Curriculum Integration

“A knowledge view and curriculum approach that consciously applies methodology and language from more than one discipline to examine a central theme, issue, problem, topic or experience.”

(Taken from: Jacobs, H. H., Ed. (1989). *Interdisciplinary Curriculum: Design and Implementation*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development).





Rationale for Curriculum Integration

- Media (television, radio, movies, music, and video games) are a constant negative influence on health behaviors of children and adolescents.
- Not enough time is allocated for health education in the schools (twenty weeks of instruction in middle/junior high school; twenty weeks in senior high school).
- When health education is offered, it is often after students have already experimented with unhealthy behaviors. (Some students do not take their high school health requirement until twelfth grade).
- Students need a counteracting positive influence on their health behaviors.
- If all teachers integrate health education information into the pre-existing curricula, students will have a counteracting positive influence on their health behaviors.
- The more students are exposed to health messages, the more likely they will be to adopt and maintain healthy behaviors.





Strategies for Implementing Curriculum Integration

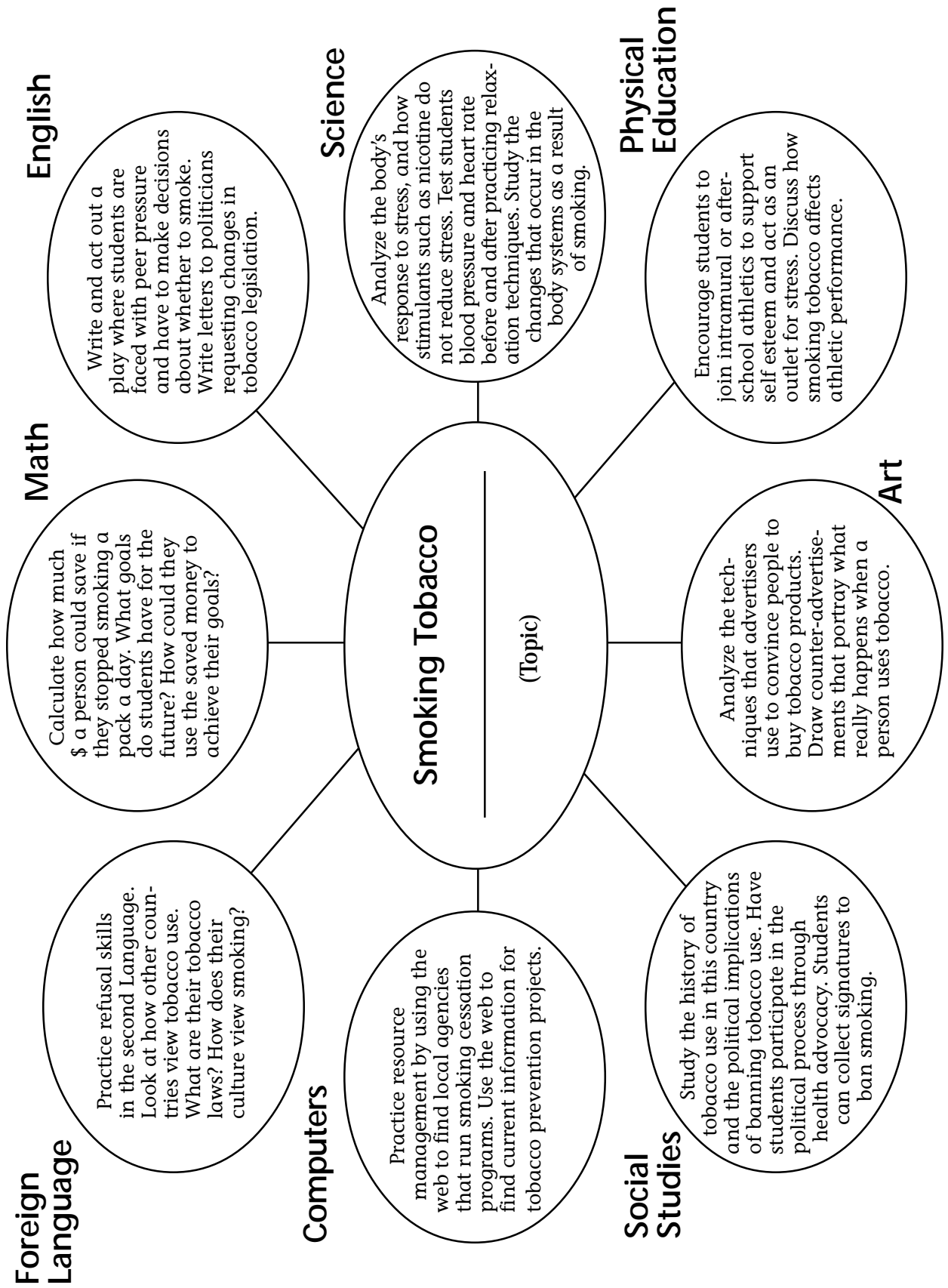
- Brainstorm and share ways health education can fit into different subject areas.
- Develop advocacy skills necessary to promote curriculum integration in the schools.
- Create materials to disseminate to teachers of other disciplines.
- Act as a resource person for teachers who want to integrate health information.
- Use national health observances to assist in supporting curriculum integration.





Handout 5-5

Graphic Organizer for Curriculum Integration Activity







Graphic Organizer for Curriculum Integration Activity

