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## Introduction

# I ntegrating the Curricula: A Collection

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*Do not confine your children to your own learning  
For they were born in another time!*—Hebrew Proverb

The call for curriculum integration is both timely and widespread. The time is right and the need is pressing, for we are living in an age when information doubles every year and a half; when futurists predict that today's seven-year-old will experience at least seven major career shifts in a lifetime; when neurologists reveal how the brain literally grows dendrites when stimulated; when cognitive psychologists discard the theory of fixed IQ and present a spectrum of multiple intelligences; when technology is changing the fields of study so rapidly that a university professor laments to his pre-med students, "By the time you graduate and become practicing physicians, fifty percent of what we've taught you will be obsolete...and we don't know which fifty percent."

In response to these societal trends, educators, community and business leaders, and learners themselves are searching for ways to create forms of schooling that are more holistic and natural; more integrated and interwoven. With that in mind, the purpose of this collection is to pull together, under one cover, the multifaceted concept of curriculum integration.

Just as with any emerging idea, questions abound and the answers seem somewhat elusive. In this book, leading voices in the field, those of the researchers and theorists, as well as those of the front-line practitioners, combine to shed light on this complex topic.

Sections 1 and 2, "Curriculum Integration: An Invitation to Learn" and "Curriculum Overview: What's the Big Picture?" explore reasons and rationale for moving toward more holistic models of learning. Section 3 places the concept of curriculum

integration squarely in the present, but frames it in a significant historical perspective by proclaiming “It’s not new!”

Section 4 presents practical models for planning integrated curriculum while Section 5 showcases actual school programs in a section entitled, “Integrated Learning: Ideas in Practice.”

Finally, the subtleties of the integration process itself are illuminated in Section 6, “Teacher Teams: Beginning the Conversations.” The book closes with a critical look at the concept from the eyes of a critic and from the eyes of the students themselves. These diverging portrayals comprise Section 7, “The Final Analysis: Two Views.”

Each section is prefaced with a brief introduction to the essays included. Readers are invited to proceed sequentially through the book from the beginning to the end or to dip in and out of the book, sampling sections that target personally relevant concerns. This collection brings into focus the multiple dimensions of integrating curricula as the educational community finds practical ways to create schooling that makes sense.

# Curriculum Integration: An Invitation to Learn

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*Education and the process of educating is a total integral, contextual situation which includes students, teachers, parents, administration and environment. —Jean Houston, Millennium: Glimpses into the 21st Century, 1981, p. 159.*

The invitation to change is received differently by the various members of the educational community. Some never receive the invitation; others claim they weren't invited; still more are invited, but choose not to attend; a few are invited and are going; and then there are those who are actually giving the party. Let's look more closely at these groups.

There are those who never get the invitation; often they don't even know that an event of consequence is in progress. These people are totally unaware, oblivious to current research and its implications for schools. They are silent and seem somewhat insulated from the changing world.

Then, there are those educators who claim they weren't invited. These are the people who charge that everything is done to them; that school reform is a top-down mandate; that they don't have a voice in the process. As a result, they *have no voice* in the process.

Another category of people are those who know they're invited, but proclaim loudly, "I'm not going! The educational pendulum swings to and fro. If I stay right here, it'll swing back to this point, again." These are the people who aggressively resist change.

Still another group are those who are looking for the invitation and accept it eagerly. These are the ones who grasp every opportunity to improve their professions and desire to renew their teaching spirit and instructional skills.