



Country: Finland

Organisation: ENO Environment Online

Contributors: teachers

How did multidisciplinary appear across different subjects when applying the PBL method?

Sanna Huovinen: *In the two projects we worked on, interdisciplinarity was clearly visible. The projects included environmental studies, history, arts and crafts in a versatile way as well as everyday life skills.*

Jaana Räisänen: *There was geography, health education, history and social studies. In mother tongue lessons, students could write essays, write essays, or do podcasts, or whatever they felt inspired to do. In this way, Finnish language and literature were also included.*

Sanni-Kaisa Martikainen: *In environmental studies, students went birdwatching and explored our nearby forest. During the project, it turned out that many of our students had never visited this stream forest before. It is a very beautiful area, but unfortunately unfamiliar to many students. In social studies, we covered Finland's system of governance, Parliament, ministers, and the role of the President. How these work in Finland.*

Coincidentally, local elections were held last spring, so we went to Marjala to examine election advertisements. This allowed us to connect the subject to what students could see in their own environment and to understand that these candidates are members of their local community.

Anni Joronen: *In religious education, the parish hall was actively used, and a representative from the parish visited the school frequently. So that was included in the project Regarding the history of Marjala, our former principal Mr. Jari Huusko took fifth graders on cycling trips to visit eight or nine historical sites in the area. Through this, students learned about local history.*

Mike Miikkola: *Utra plays a significant role in the history of Joensuu, and there is a great deal of information available. In Finnish language lessons, students worked on informational texts, they practised research skills, and writing. Mother tongue was strongly present, as well as history because we have it a lot around here environmental studies including visual arts, log-driving work was done.*

Many subjects could be integrated, and of course the fact that physical activity came automatically. Physical activity is not always about going full speed, drenched in sweat, but simply that when you move, it is good!

How can a multidisciplinary PBL approach become part of everyday school life?

Sami Rätty: *In my opinion, very well. Using the environment is already an important part of our teaching, and using the local environment and getting to know the local surroundings is integrated very well, in my opinion, into our teaching. Since outdoor learning is already strongly part of our school's program, this program integrated into it extremely well. I didn't see any problems with it.*

Henna Hulmi: *The method, in my opinion, integrates very well, and can actually be included in almost every subject. And also into the curriculum. In terms of timetables, in our teams we still have allocated hours and flexibility in such a way that we were able to get shared time. And then we have the MOK week, to which this was connected, and made things easier for us in terms of scheduling. So that all three classes could participate well. History, of course, played a major role for us here.*

Time really had to be arranged for it. That perhaps shows in the curriculum content of history, that it is not directly — of course there is also the history of the local

environment there, but also a lot of other history. At that point, the schedule almost became tight, especially with history.

Janne Salin: *PBL fits very well into the curriculum, for example, in the contents of environmental studies it directly mentions this kind of module, where students carry out or prepare an advocacy project like this, where, if possible, it would be good to use the local environment and the local community. So, as mentioned earlier, perhaps the challenge was more about the number of lesson hours, about what could be fitted naturally into the lesson framework.*

Sanna Huovinen: *In primary school, doing and planning projects is relatively easy, because we can change the timetables of our own classes quite easily.*

Anni Joronen: *Very well indeed – the Green Flag activity has been part of our everyday life here in Marjala for over years already. And in addition, we also had a multidisciplinary learning module week, which was basically organized entirely around this PBL. So the local environment was our theme there.*

How did the MOK Week support the implementation of multidisciplinary PBL?

Henna Hulmi: *This whole project culminated and came together during the MOK week the multidisciplinary learning module week. MOK week, meaning multidisciplinary learning module, means that there is a theme. It can be, for example, diversity — last year we had this PBL project. And then, across subject boundaries, meaning that the theme is integrated into many subjects. Very often, MOK week in practice is one week during which it is implemented, but it can also take place over a longer period of time, and in smaller parts.*

We then had a guest, Ismo Björn, a university historian, talking about the history of the Utra area. And that was really very nice. He showed old photographs there, and then also images from the present time. And it inspired the students a great deal, because the present day was close to them, and then they could compare what it looked like earlier on.

And then we had the water workshop one day, meaning we were down by the river studying water bugs, what could be found in the water or along the shore. And then we had the Seppo game platform, where spots had been created concretely for these historical sites, such as the Utra sawmill, the church, and the glass factory. Were there –

of them approximately? And in addition, there were spots related to recycling, which the students visited in groups.

How was the Seppo platform used as a tool during the MOK Week?

Anni Joronen: *Well, the Seppo platform was an absolute success. If there were actually funding for something like that for everyday, full-time use, the students were so enthusiastic about the platform. And they were like, “Yes, I know where this place is!” “Now let’s run there!” It was an absolute success. It was so engaging that absolutely everyone joined in, every single one of them was fully involved, so it really was an amazing thing!*

What were the perspectives and experiences of teachers in implementing a multidisciplinary school project?

Mike Miikkola: *First of all, the challenge was how to find the time. We have a lot of content in the curriculum, across all subjects. And there are quite a few lesson hours in relation to what is expected of us. And all subjects also require work and planning from the teacher. So finding the time was challenging. And if there is little time, creative ideation is difficult.*

Sanni-Kaisa Martikainen: *One major benefit of this method was that the students clearly really liked the increased amount of time spent outdoors. So in the spring, when we asked a bit about the highlights of the year that had stuck in their minds, almost everything was related to what we had done as part of this project. So the students liked that teaching and our school days became more varied.*

Jaana Räisänen: *Looking at one topic from so many different angles, and how many different themes or subjects were connected to it — that was perhaps the most significant observation. On this basis, it would be good to implement this again, so that if you do it together with another teacher, it would be good if the lessons could take place at the same time.*

Or that there would be time for planning, that time would be reserved in advance, because it does require, for example, planning work, especially if you are working with a teacher from a different subject at the same time. Especially with a teacher from another subject, you have to think about scheduling issues.

Janne Salin: *Perhaps something like this came to mind, how we could achieve multidisciplinary, perhaps combine different subjects. There is always some purpose for each subject, so one must, in a way, also as a teacher be careful that the content and subject tasks have meaning and purpose, why they are done, so that they then connect to the larger whole.*

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