



Lifelong Guidelines & LifeSkills

Integrated Thematic Instruction (ITI) Curriculum

It is obvious that having students sit quietly in rows is a worse case scenario for the brain. **Being there experiences** are tailor-made for the body-brain partnership. They provide action, emotion, and plenty of raw material for cognitive processes. In our ITI classrooms, students know what they are studying and why. The focus is on developing student understanding of important concepts, such as change, cause/effect, and interdependence.

Integrated Thematic Instruction (ITI) model answers two critical questions:

- What do you want students to understand?
- What do you want them to do with what they understand?

The ITI curriculum is engaging and powerful. The curriculum:

1. Begins with a location, event, or other important happening at the school or nearby (**the being there experience**) that integrates subject areas and skills naturally,
2. Calls upon your curriculum standards to help you select what is critical to study (**key points**), and
3. Provides ample opportunities for students to apply in real-world ways what they are learning (**inquiries**) until it is wired into long-term memory.

The ITI model we use offers practical steps to transform curriculum standards into memorable concepts and proficiency in basic skills. It lets us make standards meaningful and engaging to students with an integrated theme — our themes are structured to change each nine week grading period.

In one of our ITI classrooms, students know what they are studying and why. The focus is on developing student understanding of important concepts, such as change, cause/effect, and interdependence.

Curriculum begins with a location or event in the student's world. They investigate and conduct research to answer the big question, **What's going on around here?** State standards and learner goals are integrated into the content being studied. The key question is: **How will what students are learning lead to responsible, productive citizens?**



Lifelong Guidelines

Trustworthiness - We earn trust by respecting others and having high expectations for others.

Truthfulness - By expecting truth, we set the highest standards for behavior and performance.

No Put-Downs - Put-downs undermine trust and self-esteem and always occur at someone else's expense.

Active Listening - To listen with our eyes, our ears, our heart and undivided attention demonstrates respect and invites open communication and trust building.

Personal Best - Pride in workmanship, integrity, sense of responsibility, initiative, problem-solving skills, and motivation are essential.

LifeSkills

These provide parameters to help one evaluate his/her own performance, to guide and to help one understand which social behaviors will enhance his/her success.

- **Integrity** - To conduct oneself according to a sense of what's right and wrong.
- **Initiative** - To do something because it needs to be done.
- **Flexibility** - The ability to alter plans when necessary.
- **Perseverance** - To continue in spite of difficulties.
- **Organization** - To plan, arrange and implement in an orderly way.
- **Sense of Humor** - To laugh and be playful without hurting others.
- **Effort** - To try your best.
- **Common Sense** - To use good judgment by thinking things through.

- **Problem-Solving** - To seek solutions in difficult situations and everyday problems.
- **Responsibility** - To respond when appropriate, to be accountable for your actions.
- **Patience** - To wait calmly for someone or something.
- **Friendship** - To make and keep a friend through mutual trust and caring.
- **Curiosity** - To investigate and seek understanding.
- **Cooperation** - To work together toward a common goal or purpose.
- **Caring** - To feel and show concern for others.

Continuous Learning Environment

Instructional blocks and vacations are distributed around the calendar year so that learning is continuous. PLA utilizes the "45-10" day calendar. The students attend school approximately nine weeks and are off the following two weeks. Our longest break period, approximately eight weeks, occurs during the summer. This learning environment allows for students to progress through a continuous curriculum based upon individual needs and readiness.

