INTEGRATION$^2$ = Integrating Technology X Integrated Thematic Units

This poster session will demonstrate how preservice teachers from a university language arts class, assigned to a public school classroom, are learning to organize language arts instruction in an integrated manner using technology to support their instruction. Two laptop computers will be set up for participants to view examples of interdisciplinary units developed and carried out by the preservice teachers in public school classrooms. Digital pictures of pupils participating in various unit activities will also be on display.

Multimedia technology expands the range of language arts materials and the tools students have available for learning. Technology provides tools for learning and using the language arts - reading, listening, speaking, writing, viewing, and visually representing. The addition of viewing and visually representing illustrates the changes brought by technology.

Preservice teachers in a reading/language arts block are assigned to a public school classroom in which they work with their mentor teachers and pupils to learn firsthand what a teacher’s role is in the language arts classroom. Using the theme cycle instructional pattern for teaching language arts, students are to plan the language arts curriculum for the classroom to which they are assigned in a way that will help pupils develop communicative competence and help them get excited about literacy. Interns must also find ways to use technology to support their instruction rather than supplanting their instruction with technology.

Preservice teachers collaborate with their mentor teachers in planning and carrying out the thematic unit. Theme cycles are interdisciplinary units that integrate language arts with social studies, math, science, and other curricular areas. Students use all the language arts as they investigate, solve problems and learn during theme cycles. Technology and content integrated lessons from the unit are presented to pupils; pupils work on learning center activities; and interactive bulletin boards are introduced and displayed in the classrooms. Assessment of the unit is done before, during, and after its completion with preservice teachers reflecting on their lessons and pupil response.

Through this experience, preservice teachers are learning that children’s literacy develops most effectively through purposeful and meaningful social contexts as they create the classroom environment and a community of learners that will enhance students’ learning.