

Overview of an Integral Approach to these 4 Themes

Gaia



Emerging
Paradigm



Humanity



Global
Brain



Overview of the 4 Themes in Our Integrated Curriculum

Theme 1 of 4: Gaia

The study of Gaia provides an expanded view of our place in time and in relationship to the universe.

Gaia is about looking at our Earth as a totally integrated system where life and its material environment are so closely coupled that they interact in ways that maintain the homeostasis for life to survive. This self-regulation makes the global biosphere behave like a single living organism.

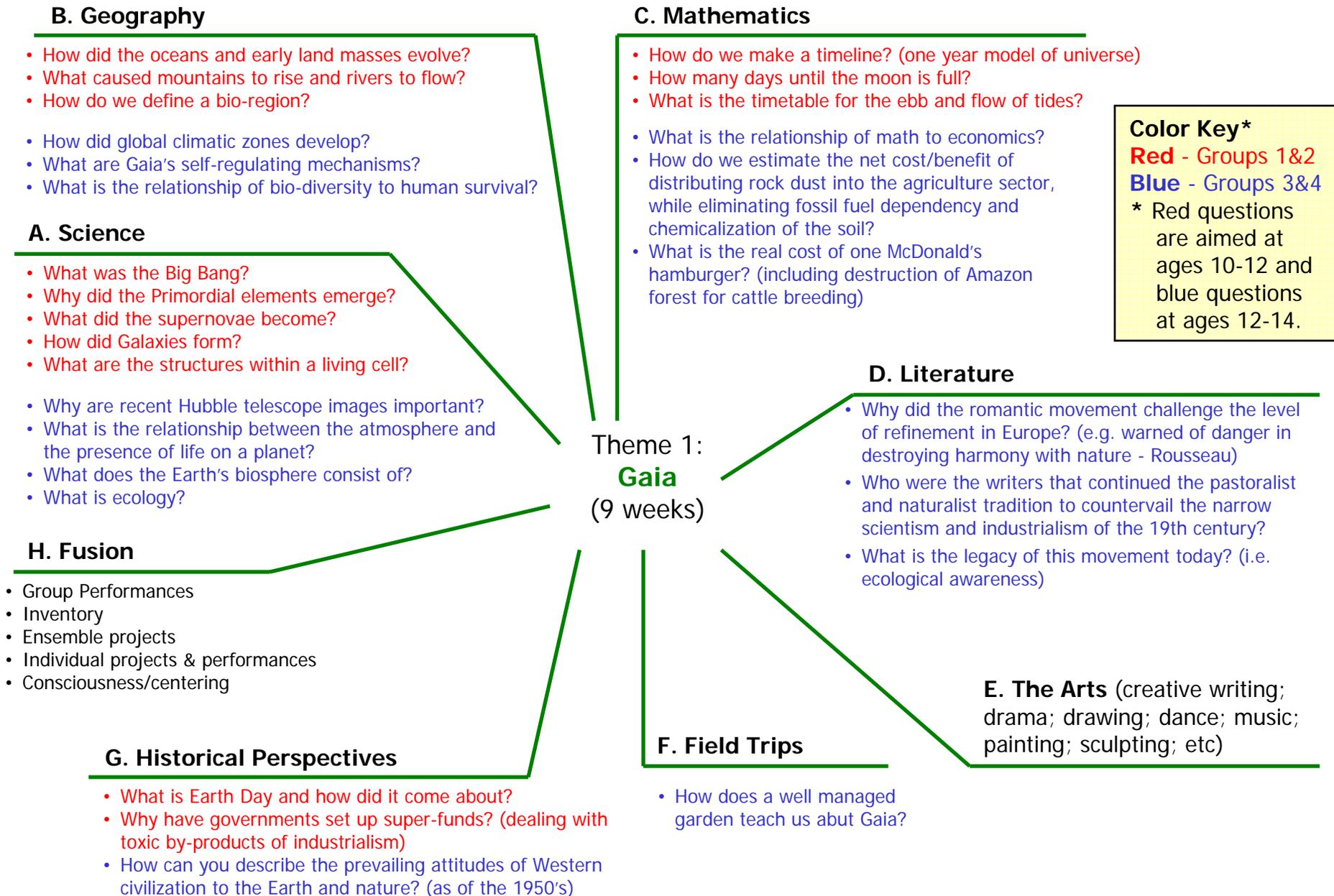
Gaia challenges humanity to realize the primary importance of treating all life and the material world in a manner that achieves a balanced ecology.

Within this area of study students and teachers will work toward a clear sense of:

- The origin and inter-relatedness of all life and its extended environment
- The importance of replenishment and restoration of ecological balance in areas where the environment is damaged.
- The need for awareness of what we use and its value

As a theme it provides a context for the following three themes which consider the uniqueness and purpose of humanity; the emergence of technology as an amplifier of human potential (both positive and negative); and the evidence that we are living in a time when an emerging world paradigm promises to transform our basic notions of person, place, time and purpose.

These maps provide examples of how State educational objectives & criteria can be integrated with our global themes. Questions like those listed below can trigger lessons within educational objectives as they pertain to Gaia.



Overview of the 4 Themes in Our Integrated Curriculum

Theme 2 of 4: Humanity

Human uniqueness within Gaia stems from our ability to think, to reason, to be aware of ourselves, to make choices, and to purposefully modify the world around us.

Human studies focus on the whole human race and develop a sense of a single human family. The migrations and coming together (divergence and confluence) of the many races (ethnic streams) tells a story that is riveting. The continual cross-pollination of culture, mythology and spiritual wealth shows how the overall experience of humanity has been woven together into a shared destiny.

Teachers will engage individuals in exploring the uses to which humans put their brains, instead of taking a historical approach, which would probably focus on topics like stages of evolution, famous dates and famous people, the delimited ages of cultural styles, etc.

Topics we want to investigate include:

- The role of trial and error in human development
- Values and group decision-making
- Degree of relatedness individuals and races share with each other
- Creativity and our amazing hand and opposable thumb
- How literature and mythology function to recognize and communicate global themes
- Culture clash.

B. Science

- What can we learn from errors?
- Why do errors happen?
- How do repeated trials help us grow and learn?
- Who has made errors and what did they learn?
- What is an experiment?
- Why are experiments useful?
- Who gets recognized as a great scientist?
- How is science used by groups of people?

C. Mathematics

- Who counts?
- Why do people count?
- What gets me counted?
- How can counting help me?
- Counting my relationships.
- Expressing my degree of relatedness.
- Using numbers when making decisions.
- Can values be expressed as numbers?

Color Key

Red - Groups 1&2

Blue - Groups 3&4

A. Geography

- In what areas of Earth did people 1st live?
- What kind of shelter did they have?
- Who lived in caves/earth-shelters?
- How did they live?
- Why did people live as nomads?
- How did consciousness drive development?
- What values corresponded with relocation?
- Why did communities develop?
- Who founded and where were the first big cities?

D. The Arts (creative writing; drama; drawing; dance; music; painting; sculpting; et.al.)

- G1: Being creative
- G2: Identifying forms of creativity.
- G3: Who gets recognized as a great artist?
- G4: Why is creativity a life skill for individuals and communities?

Theme 2: Humanity (9 weeks)

E. Literature

- What is a myth?
- Who is a key character in a myth?
- Why have myths survived for 1000's of years?
- How do myths show up in today's world?
- What is the place of literature in Culture?
- Stories of the relocation of communities.
- Books like "The Odyssey and The Iliad"

H. Fusion

- Group Performances
- Inventory
- Ensemble projects
- Individual projects & performances
- Consciousness/centering

G. Historical Perspectives

- Cave and earth-dwellers in America
- Nomads in America
- The coming of Europeans
- Colonizing America - the impact of city dwellers.
- Founding the democratic ideal in America - where citizens count.

F. Field Trips

- Science center
- Ethnographic Museum
- Art Institute
- Canvassing a neighborhood on a social issue.

Overview of the 4 Themes in Our Integrated Curriculum

Theme 3 of 4: A Global Brain

This theme tells a story of the how human potential is evolving due to the technological developments that are hard-wiring Planet Earth.

With the assistance of new digital languages such as "html", more and more individuals are gaining an easy and affordable way to communicate across great distances - not just by email and multimedia, but also in real-time audio and video.

We learn how interpersonal communication between ordinary people from diverse cultures is becoming a reality for the first time in history, with the help of technologies like the Internet.

A comparison is made between the evolutionary jumps in potential achieved when: Approximately 10 Billion atoms began sharing the language of DNA to create a living, reproducing cell; and when about 10 Billion cells linked up to form the human brain; and the potential that will be unleashed if/when 10 Billion people (the population that Earth will attain in the next decade) link up to communicate in creative ways.

The challenge of using technology responsibly is introduced. In general technology amplifies human potential -- both negative and positive potential. Teachers guide the investigation of this challenge in a manner designed to open individuals to evaluating whether their consciousness is centered on internal or on external messages.

Finally, we discuss the impact that global technology and global economy is currently having on careers and career choices.

B. Mathematics

- Why is working with large numbers valuable?
- How can a whole group be more than the sum of the parts making it up?
- What are some groups to which I belong?
- Who benefits by contributing to a group?

- Linear versus exponential growth (10^{10})
- In what ways can very large systems produce qualitative advances? (#of atoms in a cell, cells in the brain, etc.)
- How might a very large network of communicating humans produce qualitative advances on Earth?
- Who uses global communication to collaborate with others?

A. Science

- What is the lifecycle? (plants)
- Why do living things reproduce?
- How come some things reproduce on their own, while others need the help of another?
- Who has the power to help or hurt the survival of living things on Earth?

- What is DNA?
- How does diversity help us adapt to change?
- Why does our brain put us at the top of the phylogenetic scale? (conscious, language, group decision-making)
- How does global communication technology promise to enhance our ability to adapt?

H. Fusion

- Group Performances
- Inventory
- Ensemble projects
- Individual projects & performances
- Consciousness/centering

C. Literature

- What is language?
- How can language help or hurt our ability to cooperate?
- Why doesn't everyone speak the same language?
- Who benefits when people of diverse languages find ways to communicate?

- What is the language of Global communications technology?
- How can the internet facilitate Global collaboration?
- Why might the sharing of information by millions of millions be more powerful than when it's done only by experts?
- Who do you know who shares information with others on the internet?

Color Key

- Red - Groups 1&2
- Blue - Groups 3&4

D. The Arts (creative writing; drama; drawing; dance; music; painting; sculpting; etc)

- G1: Puzzles
- G2: Mosaics
- G3: Pointillism
- G4: Impressionism

E. Geography

- Where did we find early evidence of languages?
- How was language used to qualitatively improve life?
- Why do Eskimos have more words for snow, and Amazon dwellers have more words for rain?
- What populations on Earth are most and least connected by communication technology?
 - In what ways do languages reveal their ecosystem?
 - How can learning diverse ecosystems benefit us?
 - Who succeeded at finding a solution to a problem by learning from people living in a diverse ecosystem?

F. Field Trips

- Community cultural centers
- Community garden plot
- Caltech tour
- E3 exposition

Theme 3: Global Brain (9 weeks)

G. Historical Perspectives

- What are some diverse ways you can contribute to government? (vote, campaign, run, petition, etc.)
- Why does getting input from many usually work better?
- How do voters learn to make an informed decision?
- Who makes list of pros & cons before taking action?

- Name a leader that is known for involving large numbers of people?
- What are some contributions and obstacles the USA has made to the internet?
- Why might advanced communication technology threaten some people?
- How have opportunities to contribute to the world been impacted by communication technology?

Overview of the 4 Themes in Our Integrated Curriculum

Theme 4 of 4: The Emerging World Paradigm

This theme tells a story of the how human consciousness is always striving to expand toward a greater realization of enlightenment.

We look at some of the diverse ways people search for truth, beauty, peace and a sense of well being. The hero/heroine in this story is the individual who strives to evaluate the merit of external messages coming from agents or agencies that seek to manipulate our sense of place in time. Teachers guide individuals toward evaluating the merit of alternatives by centering on choices that contribute to beauty, peace and harmony in the present moment.

Topics, such as freedom, objective observation, the accelerating rate of change, and complexity are integrated with the human search for “community”.

We explore how an enlightened community might function, by considering the waste produced by communities that function to exclude individuals and amass power in the hands of relatively few,

Models created by futurists indicating that if humanity is able to survive the growing threat of ecological crises, a major world paradigm shift is highly probable within the first half of the 21st Century (a few of the models indicate that the shift will happen within the next decade). There is every indication that the next world paradigm shift will be more sweeping than the all of the changes in past 2000 years.

The story of this theme does not end. It brings us full circle, back to the story of Gaia that the school year starts with.

B. Mathematics

- What is measurement?
- Why does measurement benefit people?
- How do I use measurements in my life?
- Who decides which measurements are important?
- How do we calculate proportional relationships? (e.g. the relative size and separation of the planets)
- How do we measure progress?
- What is amplification?
- Why do asymptotes and singularity occur?
- Chaos and fractals

A. Science

- What is observation?
- How do repeated observations help us learn?
- Why is it important to be objective?
- Who has experienced an obstacle to being objective?
- What similarities are there between the development of an individual and the development of a species?
- How could "memes" take over where "genes" leave off?
- Can physics give us information about humanity?
- Why does change accelerate?
- What is a quantum jump?

H. Fusion

- Group Performances
- Inventory
- Ensemble projects
- Individual projects & performances
- Consciousness/centering

C. Literature

- What does it mean to start from scratch?
- How does speech free us from starting from scratch?
- Who has written things that helped us grow?
- Why can we benefit by writing down our thoughts and feelings?
- What does the end of human evolution look like in literature? (eg. Childhood's End, Arthur C Clarke)
- Why must humanity struggle to balance inner growth with technological development. (eg. The Matrix)
- Who and what is a loving human being? (eg. Love, Leo Buscaglia)
- How does society try to control inner thought? (eg. Waking Up, Charles Tart)

Color Key

Red - Groups 1&2

Blue - Groups 3&4

D. The Arts (creative writing; drama; drawing; dance; music; painting; sculpting; etc)

- Channeling the present
- Perceptual shifts
- Love as attraction to life itself
- Can inner needs be satisfied by outer events?

Theme 4: Emerging World Paradigm (9 weeks)

E. Geography

- What is a city?
- How is a community different from a city?
- Who can describe the community you live in?
- Why do people seek out specific communities?
- What does community mean?
- Who forms pseudo-communities? (economies; "zealots")
- Why do people search for a meaningful community?
- How can communities exist without external boundaries

G. Historical Perspectives

- What freedoms are protected in the USA?
- Who decides when freedom is abused?
- Why do people create laws?
- How might a law conflict with personal freedom?
- Freedom for what?
- Moving beyond survival: Emancipation Proclamation, The New Deal, The 1960's
- Ethics and priorities - Judgment versus Evaluation
- Marketing - balancing internal and external messages.

F. Field Trips

- Observing in nature
- Observing in a shopping mall
- Museum of Tolerance
- Observing a Court case
- Taking in a selected movie (Matrix?)