



Interdisciplinarity for All?

Considering School-Level Interdisciplinary Learning

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My Story

2021 Graduate from University of Birmingham's **Liberal Arts and Sciences**

creativity ● academically rigorous
personal growth ● problem solving
visible relevance of learning

Why shouldn't everyone experience this?

 Now **classroom teacher** and
practitioner-researcher at an IB
State Comprehensive School



within our school...

→ (the course I teach)

In the Middle Years Programme (MYP), interdisciplinary learning supports students to understand bodies of knowledge from two or more disciplines or subject groups, in order to integrate them and create new understanding.

↓
Features that interdisciplinary thinkers such as Allen Repko, William Newell and Julie Thompson Klein identify as central to interdisciplinary thinking

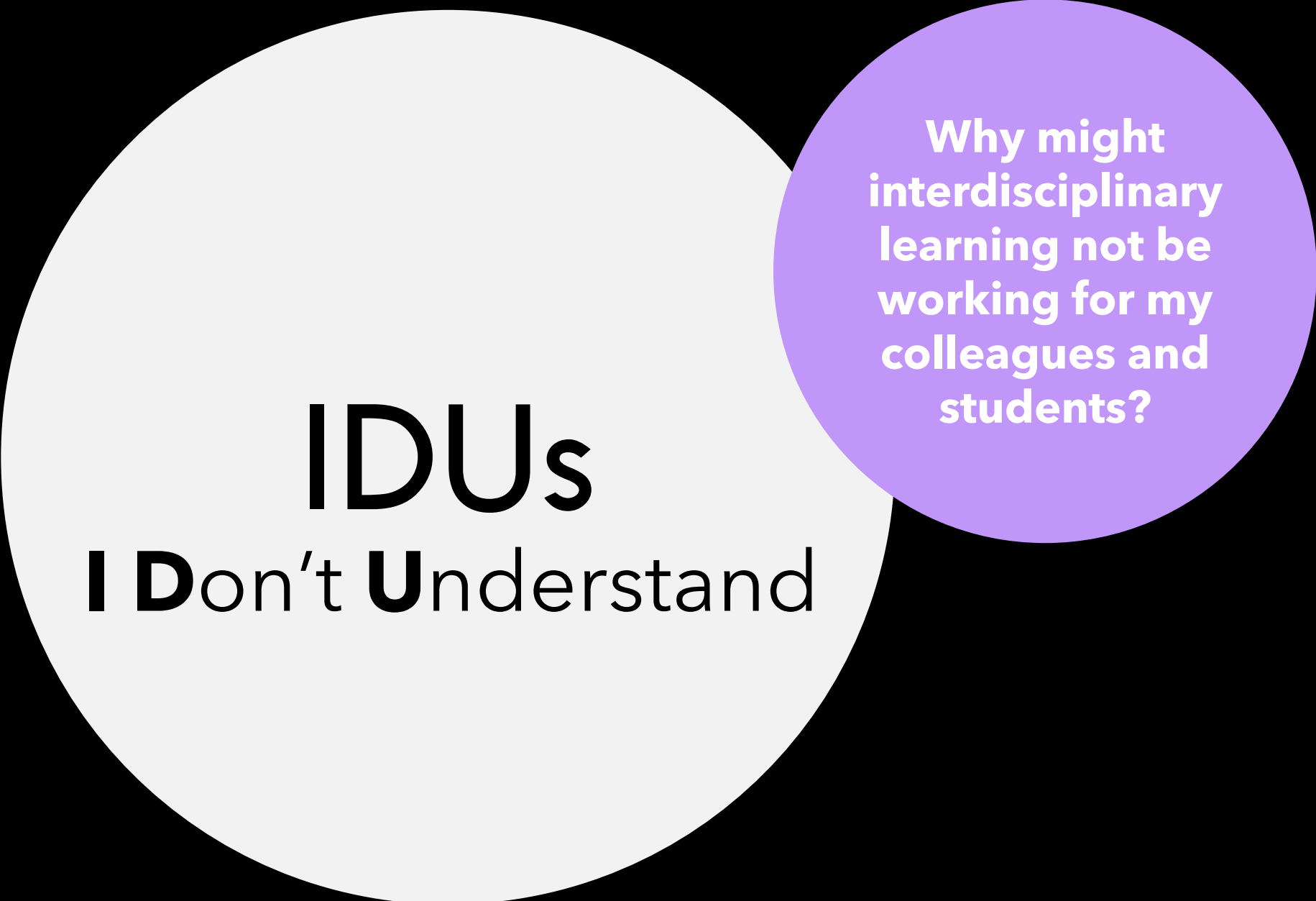


Interdisciplinary Units (IDUs)

Year 7: differing approaches to empathy that **History** vs **English** take when considering the Elizabethan Witch Trials

Year 8: explore the theme of energy in both **Food Tech** and **PE**

Year 9: using **art** to make 3D **scientific** models



IDUs
I Don't Understand

**Why might
interdisciplinary
learning not be
working for my
colleagues and
students?**



it's not just us...

in a Scottish curriculum report... **confusion**

during an Israeli school's interdisciplinary project... **missed opportunities**

from interviews with other MYP teachers... **overwhelmed**



How can we get **this** success into the classroom?

...possible pitfalls

from policy reform

"the more ideologically abstract a policy is... the less likely it is to be accommodated" ~ Stephen J. Ball

"interdisciplinarity" = abstract

What is the **content** of interdisciplinarity?

from comparative pedagogy

*"school reforms are poor travellers"
~ Pasi Sahlberg*

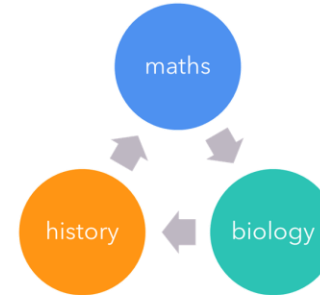
university \neq school

What is the **context** of schools?

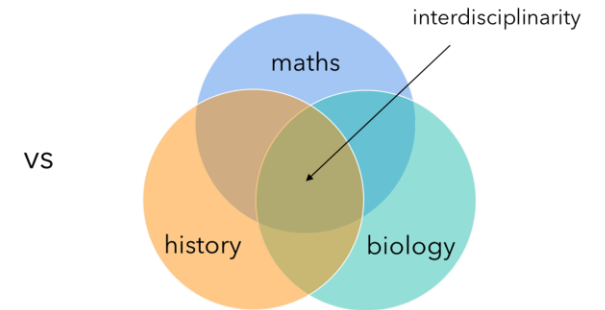
the content of interdisciplinarity

understanding the definition
= *synthesis of disciplinary perspectives*

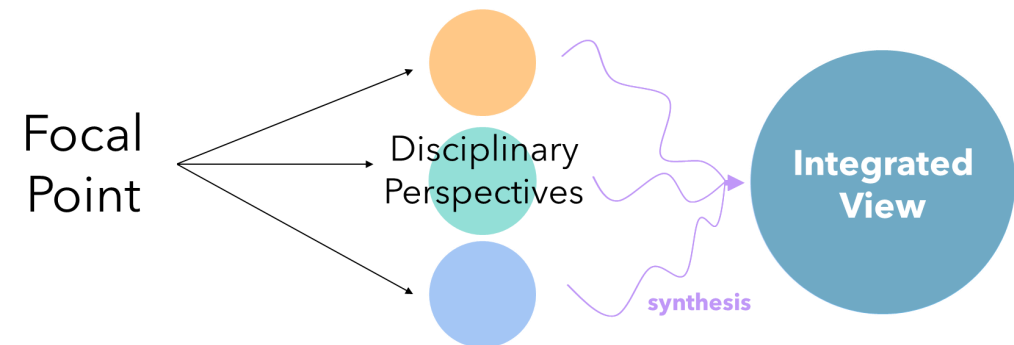
Multidisciplinary



Interdisciplinary



developing a framework





the context of classroom

Time Strain

= need for *easily* understandable
and actionable changes

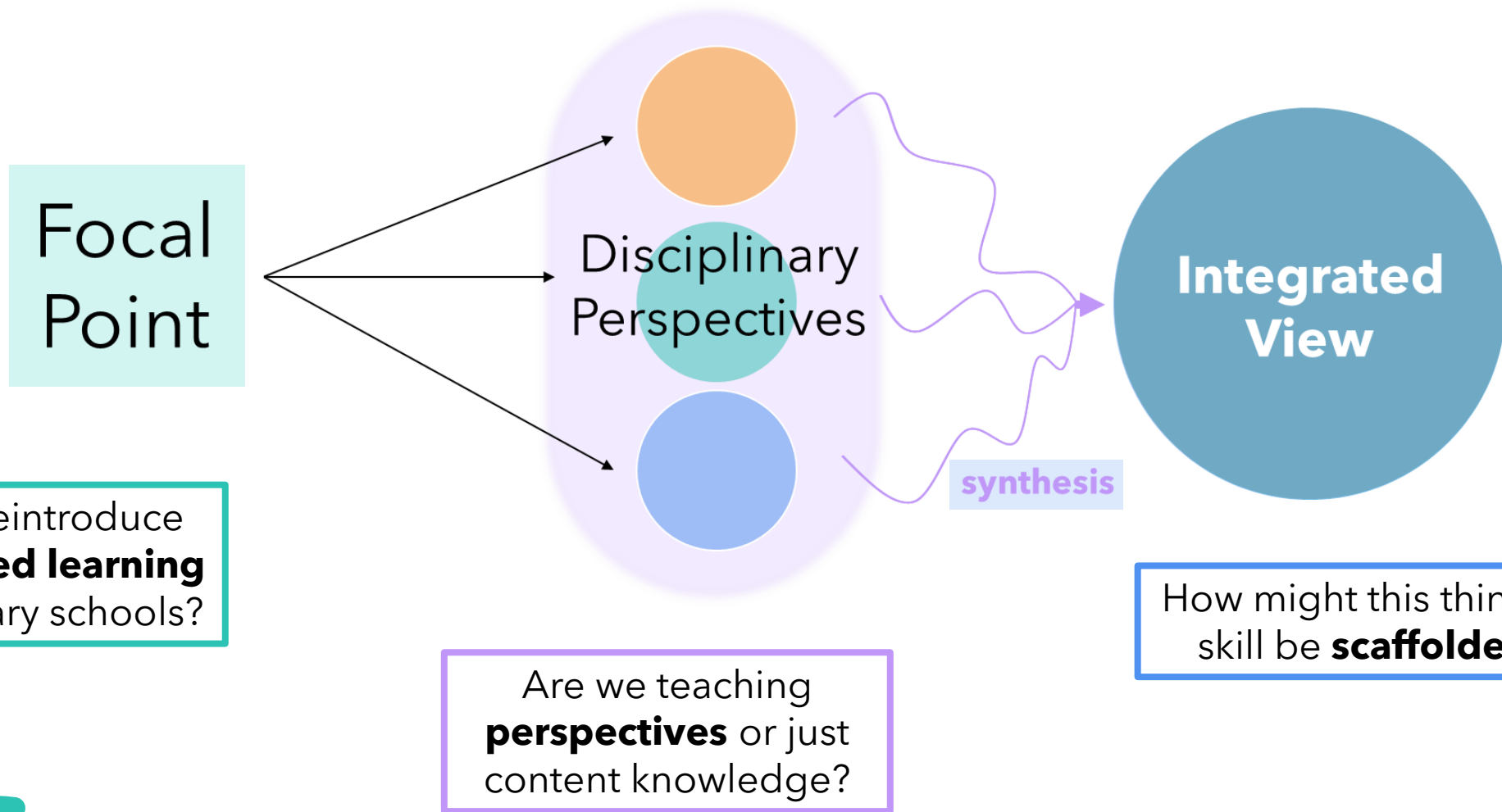
Assessments

= content-heavy teaching

Adaptive Teaching

= scaffolding

The **Content** within the **Context**



Next Steps

Project-Based Learning

= systematic change

Teaching Disciplinary Perspectives

= focus as a classroom teacher using...

Criterion A: Knowing and understanding

Criterion B: Investigating patterns

Criterion C: Communicating

Criterion D: Applying mathematics in real-life contexts

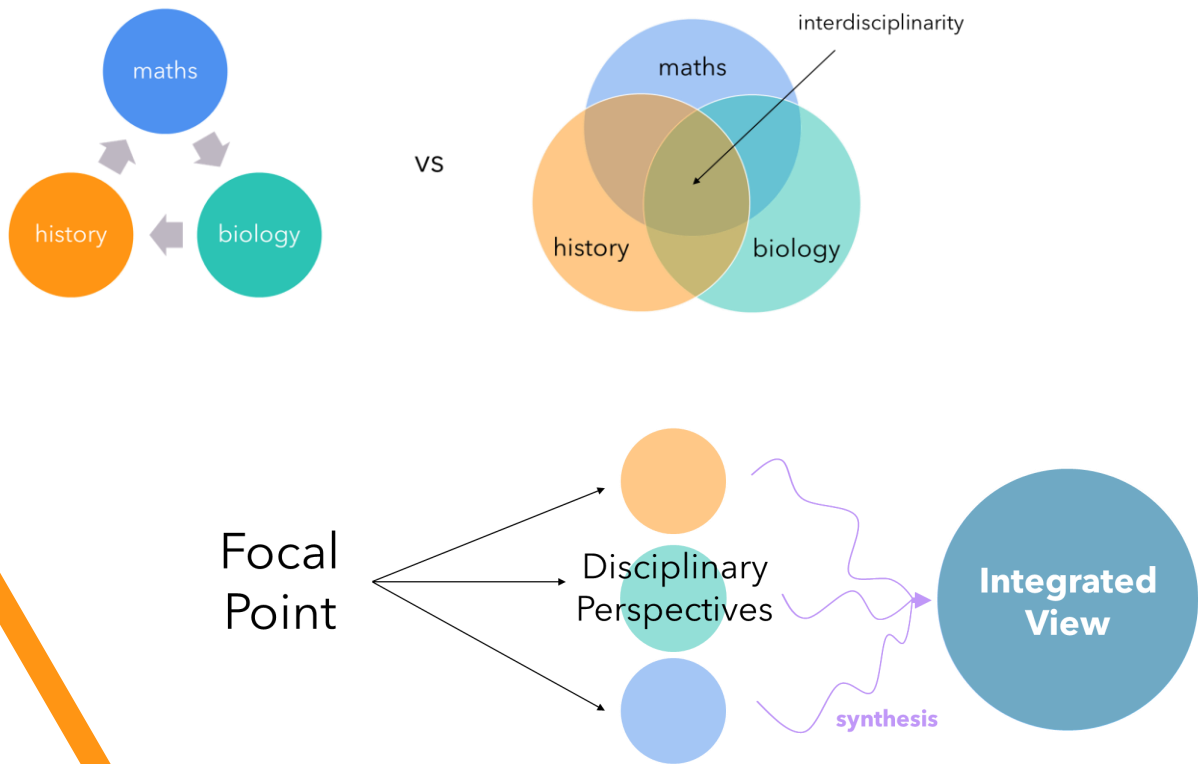
MYP's holistic
assessment criteria
for maths
(something that makes our
school special!)

Scaffolding Synthesis = my
research focus → developing a
toolbox of classroom activities

To bring **interdisciplinary learning** into **secondary classrooms...**

1 demystify the definition and process

2 develop and encourage supportive pedagogies




Project Based Learning

Teaching Disciplinary Perspectives

Scaffolding Synthesis

References

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Thank you for listening
and considering school-
level interdisciplinarity...

any questions, comments or further thoughts?

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