Learning each other's ropes: Negotiating interdisciplinary authenticity

Interdisciplinary learning is one of many ways to learn over the course of a curriculum. When educators consider their curricular objectives and students' needs, they may choose interdisciplinary learning to deliver part or all of the content they will present. This method can help bring students to a new awareness of the meaningful connections that exist among the disciplines. For example, a teacher might choose to design an interdisciplinary unit entitled "Reality and Illusion" and use the phrase "seeing is believing" as an organizing center. Students would then be able to see connections across disciplines. There is no challenge to each other's discipline in this instance. Mode 3 is when knowledge is compatible but needs additional interpretation to be meaningful. One example in the case of systems science, which is sometimes described as being more of an art or craft than a science. An intersection is a system of negotiating contexts. Most intersections involve techniques, specialised skills and instruments. Intersections, though, also occur in interpretive phases, from borrowing vocabulary and ideas to theoretical explanations such as new grounding of 'valence' and 'gene' in other disciplines. (p. 9).