

Integrative Thinking:

What is it? Why do we do it?

MT Engage Summer Institute, May 2017

What is MT Engage?

The MT Engage QEP is focused on enhancing students' academic engagement by:

1. Providing students with high impact pedagogies
2. Challenging students to use integrative thinking and reflection across multiple contexts and educational experiences.

Pre-Reflection on Integrative Thinking

1. I'm not sure about this subject. (prestructural)
2. I have one idea about this subject. (unistructural)
3. I have several ideas about this subject. (multistructural)
4. I can link my ideas about this subject together with other ideas to see a bigger picture. (relational)
5. I can look at these ideas in new and different ways. (extended abstract)

From SOLO Taxonomy

MT Engage Defines Integrative Thinking as...

An understanding and a disposition that a student builds across the curriculum and cocurriculum, from making simple connections among ideas and experiences to synthesizing and transferring learning to new, complex situations within and beyond the campus.

AAC&U, 2009

Integrative Thinking

Students' ability to

- 1) Make connections to relevant experiences
- 2) Make connections across academic disciplines
- 3) Adapt and apply information to new situations
- 4) Integrated communication
- 5) Reflect and self-assess

Modified from the AAC&U Integrative Thinking Value Rubric

Why integrative thinking?

"integrative learning (the ability to connect knowledge across fields, experiences, and levels) is a central characteristic of the intentional learner"

This is important because "intentional learners are prepared to thrive in a complex, interdependent, diverse, and constantly changing world. Ready to adapt to new environments and integrate knowledge from various sources, they will continue learning throughout their lives"

(Leskes & Miller, p. 2)

Think-Pair-Share

- Think of a significant learning experience.
- Why was this significant to you?
(jot down a few ideas on post its)
- Share with a partner.

How Learning Works 7 Research-Based Principles for Smart Teaching

1. Provide authentic, real world tasks (ch. 3)
2. Connect material to students' interests (ch. 3)
3. Give students opportunity to apply skills or knowledge in diverse contexts (ch. 4)
4. Give students opportunity to reflect and self-assess (ch. 3, ch. 7)

Student Motivation

"Students' motivation generates, directs, and sustains what they do to learn" (*How Learning Works*, p. 83).

"Expectancies and values interact to influence the **level of motivation** to engage in goal-directed behavior," (p. 70)

Establishing Value

Strategies to establish value:

- Provide authentic, real world tasks
 - Connect to experience
 - Adapt and apply information to new situations
- Show relevance to students' current academic lives
 - Make connections across courses / academic disciplines
- Demonstrate the relevance to future professional lives
 - Adapt and apply information to new situations
 - Reflect and self-assess

From: *How Learning Works*

Summary: Why do we do it?

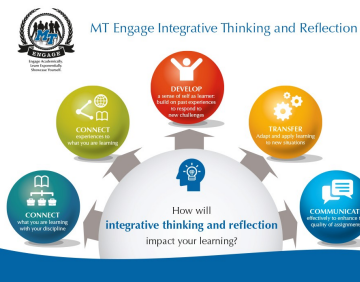
Improve student's ability to

- see connections
- be a reflective practitioner
- apply their learning

And

- increases student motivation
- establishes value of their learning
- promotes lifelong learning

Questions?



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