

## **Working Concept Paper**

### **MT Engage: Engage Academically, Learn Exponentially, Showcase Yourself**

The MT Engage QEP involves students in academic engagement and critical reflection. This is accomplished by creating a culture of engagement emphasizing within the classroom (WTC) and beyond the classroom (BTC) experiences and reflecting on these experiences within an ePortfolio which showcases the knowledge, skills and abilities achieved.

MTSU defines academic engagement as a student's active learning experiences as demonstrated through quality of effort, physical and psychological involvement, and participation in productive learning activities. Productive learning activities might include high impact activities outlined in the Association of American Colleges & Universities *High Impact Educational Practices* (Kuh, 2008).

Some examples include:

- first-year seminars and experiences
- common intellectual experiences
- learning communities
- writing intensive courses
- collaborative assignments and projects
- undergraduate research
- diversity/global learning
- service learning/community-based learning
- internships
- capstone courses and projects

plus other identified at MTSU (e.g., project based learning, EXL, civic engagement, flipped classrooms, Reacting to the Past, study abroad, etc.). Beyond the classroom experiences could also include co-curricular activities, participating in related campus events, etc.

Freshman will be recruited during CUSTOMS to take part in the MT Engage Program which will include registering for MT Engage courses in the freshman and sophomore year (minimum of 4 courses) and constructing an ePortfolio. At the end of the sophomore year, ePortfolios could be reviewed and awards given for the exemplary MT Engage student. These awards may include a scholarship for the Junior and Senior year.

The ePortfolio concept will be introduced in UNIV 1010 and/or a freshman-level introduction course in the major such as Introduction to Theatre Studies. A foundation course could 1) introduce the ePortfolio concept; 2) discuss skills needed for success in academics and profession; 3) help students plan for MTSU BTC opportunities to build these skills and require attendance in at least one BTC experience; and 4) require critical reflection ePortfolio assignments regarding career exploration and academic and career goals. Professional advisors can refer to the academic and career goals during regular advising sessions.

Freshman and Sophomore-level courses will be enhanced through incorporating WTC and BTC engagement strategies and critical reflection products which will be completed within the ePortfolio. Faculty will receive incentives for participating in professional development activities leading toward the enhancement of courses.

Majors will be recruited to enhance courses with academic engagement strategies and utilize the ePortfolio to help students reflect on their experiences, make connections, and think critically about their experiences in order to decide how to best present their knowledge, skills and abilities to others, including potential employers. In addition to MT Engage faculty, the MT Engage Office as well as the University Library Digital Media Studio, University Writing Center and students serving as ePortfolio mentors would also assist students in designing their ePortfolio. Awards and recognition would be available for senior MT Engage students.

Students would be asked to complete an ePortfolio that could include the items below.

- About Me
- Academic and Career Objectives
  - Include academic commitments
  - Short-term and long-term career objectives
- Knowledge/Skills/Abilities
  - evidence required from within the classroom and beyond the classroom learning as well as reflection
- Resume

Faculty will be asked to

- Teach and assist in UNIV 1010 and/or freshman-level introduction course in major
- Participate in enhancement of General Education courses by incorporating **academic engagement strategies and critical reflection** ePortfolio assignments
- Participate in Professional Development/Training on academic engagement strategies and critical reflection using ePortfolios best practices
- Create faculty learning communities around critical reflection using ePortfolios and academic engagement topics
- Utilize the ePortfolio for their major

### **Student Touch Points for ePortfolio Development**

- CUSTOMS
- Professional Advisors (ongoing)
- UNIV 1010
- General Education Instructors
- Major
- Digital Media Studio, University Library
- University Writing Center

- ePortfolio mentors (ongoing)

### **Student Learning Outcomes**

This project enriches MTSU's commitment to academic engagement and enhancing students' abilities to communicate and think critically. The ePortfolio will encourage more attention to reflection, deeper thinking, and synthesis and assist students in understanding and communicating their experiences and knowledge to others. The following student learning outcome measures would be assessed:

- **Integrative/Reflective Thinking**
- **Personal and Professional Development**
- **Effective Communication**

### **Program Goals**

- ***Goal 1: Foster a culture of engaged learning and integrative/reflective thinking.*** This will be accomplished through the infusing of high impact educational practices across the curriculum.
- ***Goal 2: Enhance student satisfaction with their learning, personal development, and professional development:*** Students who participate in MT Engage will report greater satisfaction with their learning, personal development, and professional development.
- ***Goal 3: Improve student retention, progression, graduation.***