

MTSU's New Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP)



Engage Academically. Learn Exponentially.
Showcase Yourself.

Overview

- I. MT Engage Basics
- II. The Big Picture
- III. Next Steps

I. MT ENGAGE BASICS

WHAT IT IS

What is a QEP?

- A Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) is a core requirement for SACSCOC accreditation.
- The QEP is a 5 year initiative to improve student learning.
- MT Engage is MTSU's QEP for 2016-2021.

What is MT Engage?

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

1. Providing students with high impact pedagogies in and out of the classroom, and
2. Challenging students to use integrative thinking and reflection across multiple contexts and educational experiences.

Academic Engagement (def.)

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.

1. Providing High-Engagement Learning Opportunities

capstone courses/projects	service learning
internships	project based learning
first year seminars	EXL
learning communities	civic engagement
writing intensive courses	flipped classrooms
collaborative assignments	Reacting to the Past
undergraduate research	education abroad
global learning	common intellectual experiences

Expanded from Kuh, 2008 & AAC&U HIEPS

2. Challenging Students to Use Integrative Thinking & Reflection

Students will be assessed on their ability to:

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

Modified from the AAC&U Integrative Thinking Value Rubric

The MT Engage Student Learning Outcome is:

Integrative Thinking and Reflection:

Students will use integrative thinking and reflection to demonstrate the ability to make connections across multiple contexts and educational experiences.

Why Integrative Thinking?

“Developing students’ capacity for integrative learning is central to personal success, social responsibility, and civic engagement...Students face a rapidly-changing and ever-more-interconnected world, in which integrative learning becomes not just a benefit...but a necessity.”

AACU, 2004

Why Reflection?

“A growing number of cognitive researchers and educational theorists have studied the reflective process and concluded that it is key to enriched student learning.”

In *How People Learn: Brain, Mind, Experience and School*, Bransford et al. identify and examine “research that demonstrated the benefits of reflection for student learning in topics as diverse as physics, writing and mathematics, as well as for increasing the degree to which students transfer their learning across disciplines and semesters.”

cited in Eynon, Gambino, & Torok, 2014

Assessing & Documenting Integrative Thinking and Reflection

- ePortfolios: for showcasing students' integration of the knowledge skills, and abilities gained at MTSU
- Rubrics: to assess integration and reflection in the classroom & the ePortfolio
- Surveys: to assess student engagement & perceptions of knowledge, skills, & abilities

ePortfolio Benefits

Reflective ePortfolios help students connect and make meaning from otherwise isolated learning experiences. This deepens the inquiry process and helps students integrate their learning into a larger framework of education and purposeful self-authorship.

From Catalyst for Learning

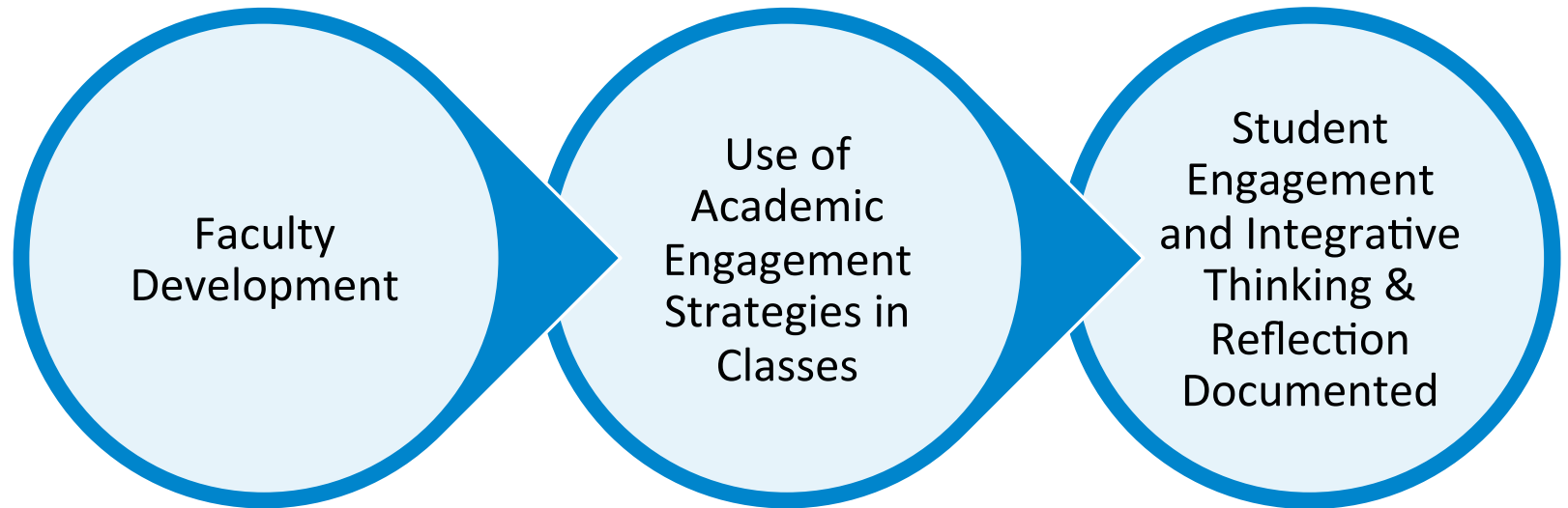
II. THE BIG PICTURE

MT ENGAGE: PROGRAM GOALS AND INITIATIVES

MT Engage Program Goals

- ***Goal 1: Foster a culture of engaged learning.***
- ***Goal 2: Improve student retention, progression, & graduation***

MT Engage Overview



MT Engage Initiatives

Curriculum initiatives:

- 1. MT Engage Foundation Pathway:** Faculty support for enhancing existing lower division courses with:
 - high impact, engaging pedagogy,
 - a beyond-the-course experience, and
 - integrative/reflective thinking assignments placed in an ePortfolio.
- 2. MT Engage Major Pathway:** Departmental support for:
 - curriculum development and redesign to incorporate MT Engage components,
 - revising classes to incorporate high impact, engaging pedagogies and integrative/reflective thinking assignments, and
 - assistance tailoring the ePortfolio to the major.

MT Engage Initiatives (Cont.)

These initiatives will support the curricular pathways:

3. **MT Engage Faculty Development:** Workshops, learning communities, and technology training opportunities will be offered.
4. **MT Engage Experiences:** A searchable database consisting of high impact beyond-the-classroom experiences will be developed and maintained for students. An MT Engage Week will be held each fall semester to provide focused attention on the many opportunities available to students.
5. **MT Engage Recognition Program:** A program will be developed to recognize students who complete various levels of these learning experiences both within the general education curriculum (i.e., the first two years) and beyond.

MT Engage Components for Students

The components reflect the theme Engage Academically, Learn Exponentially, Showcase Yourself through

- **In-the-Classroom Experiences:** Students will complete two MTE courses as freshman; two MTE courses as sophomores; two MTE courses in their major.
- **Beyond-the-Classroom Experiences:** Students will complete at least one beyond the classroom experience in each MTE class and document in ePortfolio
- **ePortfolio** will be assessed at the end of the sophomore year, and scholarships for exemplary ones may be awarded; completed e-Portfolio will be assessed after the first semester of the senior year. Senior awards given.
- **End of the Program Interview** may be an option for students who have completed the final ePortfolio and two additional courses in their major. Senior interview awards given.

MT Engage Incentives for Students

The following are being considered:

- Early Registration Privileges (proposing)
- Scholarship Opportunities (proposing)
- Recognition at Certain Benchmarks
 - Freshmen: t-shirt, signed pledge card, MT Engage button, lanyard, etc.; spring recognition event
 - Sophomore & Junior: Eligible to become mentors & obtain class credit (MTE Seminar/Practicum); spring recognition event; scholarship(s) to be awarded at event
 - Senior: mentoring role, certificate of completion, spring recognition event; senior ePortfolio cash awards given at event; electronic badge awarded for completion at a certain level

Problem Being Addressed

What primary problem is our QEP addressing?

Lack of student engagement within and beyond-the-classroom

Lack of integrative thinking and reflection by students

Additional problems this QEP can address:

Underdeveloped communication skills

Lack of career and professional readiness

Retention of students

Significance

MT Engage is significant for students' learning and lives. Increased academic engagement and integrative thinking and reflection have been shown to increase student learning and student retention and contribute to lifelong learning.

Significance

Our success will change our campus in these ways:

- MTSU will be known as a campus that values engaged learning.
- Students will be expected to actively contribute to their learning environment through class activities, collaborations, research, service, civic engagement, etc.
- Students will have a better understanding of themselves and their learning, as well as their skills and abilities, through integrative thinking and reflection.

How is MT Engage different from our last QEP?

- MT Engage initially focuses on freshman and sophomore level courses and students, including a sophomore ePortfolio product.
- MT Engage expands the academic engagement strategies beyond EXL (internships, education abroad, applied experience, service-learning, creative activity, teacher education and lab courses).
- MT Engage is focusing on only one student learning outcome which is integrative thinking and reflection.

III. NEXT STEPS

... AND HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED

MT Engage Timeline

Activity	Date
Gather campus feedback	Fall 2015
Draft of plan to campus for feedback	November 2015
Pilot aspects of project	Fall 2015 and Spring 2016
Determine ePortfolio tool	Fall 2015
Submit QEP to SACSCOC	February 2016
List MT Engage Courses on Fall 2016 Schedule	March 2016
SACSCOC on-site visit	March 29-31, 2016
Implement MT Engage	Fall 2016

Next Steps: Getting Involved

1. Review information on the MT Engage website, provide feedback via email, and attend open forums.
2. Submit an interest form to teach an MT Engage course at www.mtsu.edu/mtengage.
3. Request more information from Dianna Rust (Dianna.Rust@mtsu.edu).

Questions and Comments?



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