AAC&U RUBRIC: INTEGRATIVE LEARNING

Definition: Integrative learning is 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.

	STAGE #4 (EXEMPLARY)	STAGE #3 (ADEQUATE)	STAGE #2	STAGE #1
CONNECTIONS TO EXPERIENCE Connects relevant experience and academic knowledge	Meaningfully **synthesizes** connections among experiences outside of the formal classroom (including life experiences and academic experiences such as internships and travel abroad) to **deepen understanding** of fields of study and to broaden own points of view.	Effectively **selects and develops** examples of life experiences, drawn from a variety of contexts (e.g., family life, artistic participation, civic involvement, work experience), to **illuminate** concepts/theories/ frameworks of fields of study.	**Compares** life experiences and academic knowledge to infer differences, as well as similarities, and **acknowledges perspectives** other than own.	**Identifies** connections between life experiences and those academic texts and ideas **perceived as similar and related** to own interests.
CONNECTIONS TO DISCIPLINE Sees (makes) connections across disciplines, perspectives	Independently creates wholes out of multiple parts (synthesizes) or draws conclusions by combining examples, facts, or theories from more than one field of study or perspective.	Independently connects examples, facts, or theories from more than one field of study or perspective.	When prompted, connects examples, facts, or theories from more than one field of study or perspective.	When prompted, presents examples, facts, or theories from more than one field of study or perspective.
TRANSFER Adapts and applies skills, abilities, theories, or methodologies gained in one situation to new situations	Adapts and applies, independently, skills, abilities, theories, or methodologies gained in one situation in a new situation **to solve difficult problems or explore complex issues in original ways**.	Adapts and applies skills, abilities, theories, or methodologies gained in one situation in a new situation **to solve problems or explore issues**.	Uses skills, abilities, theories, or methodologies gained in one situation in a new situation **to contribute to understanding of problems or issues**.	Uses, in a basic way, skills, abilities, theories, or methodologies gained in one situation **in a new situation**.
INTEGRATED COMMUNICATION	Fulfills the assignment(s) by choosing a format, language, or graph (or other visual representation) **in ways that enhance meaning**, making clear the interdependence of language and meaning, though, and expression.	Fulfills the assignment(s) by choosing a format, language, or graph (or other visual representation) **to explicitly connect content and form**, demonstrating awareness of purpose and audience.	Fulfills the assignment(s) by choosing a format, language, or graph (or other visual representation) that **connects in a basic way** what is being communicated (content) with how it is said (form).	Fulfills the assignment(s) (i.e., to produce an essay, a poster, a video, a PowerPoint presentation, etc.) **in an appropriate form.**
REFLECTION AND SELF-ASSESSMENT Demonstrates a developing sense of self as a learner, building on prior experiences to respond to new and challenging contexts (may be evident in self-assessment, reflective, or creative work)	Envisions a future self (and possibly makes plans that build on past experiences that have occurred across multiple and diverse contexts).	Evaluates changes in own learning over time, recognizing complex contextual factors (e.g., works with ambiguity and risk, deals with frustration, considers ethical frameworks).	Articulates strengths and challenges (within specific performances or events) to increase effectiveness in different contexts (through increased self-awareness).	Describes own performances with general descriptors of success and failure.

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FRAMING LANGUAGE

Fostering students' abilities to integrate learning—across courses, over tie, and between campus and community life—is one of the most important goals and challenges for higher education. Initially, students connect previous learning to new classroom learning. Later, significant knowledge within individual disciplines serves as the foundation, but integrative learning goes beyond academic boundaries. Indeed, integrative experiences often occur as learners address real-world problems that are unscripted and sufficiently broad to require multiple areas of knowledge and multiple modes of inquiry, problems for which multiple solutions have been offered and that benefit from multiple perspectives. Integrative learning also involves internal changes in the learner. These internal changes, which indicate growth as a confident lifelong learner, include the ability to adapt one's intellectual skills, to contribute in a wide variety of situations, and to understand and develop individual purpose, values, and ethics. Developing students' capacities for integrative learning is central to personal success, social responsibility, and civic engagement in today's global society. Students face a rapidly changing and increasingly connected world where integrative learning becomes not just a benefit, but a necessity.

Because integrative learning is about making connections, this learning may not be as evident in traditional academic artifacts such as research papers and academic projects unless the student is, for example, prompted to draw implications for practice. These connections often surface, however, in reflective work, self-assessment, and creative endeavors of all kinds. Integrative assignments foster learning between courses or by connecting courses to experientially based work. Through integrative learning, students pull together their entire experience inside and outside of the formal classroom; thus, artificial barriers between formal study and informal or tacit learning become permeable. Integrative learning, whatever the context or source, builds upon connecting both theory and practice toward a deepened understanding.

Assignments to foster such connections and understanding could include, for example, composition papers that focus on topics from biology, economics, or history; mathematics assignments that apply mathematical tools to important issues and require written analysis to explain the implications and limitations of the mathematical treatment; or art history presentations that demonstrate aesthetic connections between selected paintings and novels. In this regard, some majors (e.g., interdisciplinary majors or problem-based field studies) seem inherently to evoke characteristics of integrative learning and result in work samples or collections of work that significantly demonstrate this outcome. However, fields of study that require accumulation of extensive and high-consensus content knowledge (such as accounting, engineering, or chemistry) also involve the kinds of complex and integrative constructions (e.g., ethical dilemmas and social consciousness) that seem to be highlighted so extensively in self-reflection in the arts and the humanities, but they may be embedded in individual performances and less evident. The key to the development of such work samples or collections of work will be in designing structures that include artifacts and reflective writing or feedback that support students'' examination of their learning and give evidence that, as graduates, they will extend their integrative abilities to the challenges of personal, professional, and civic life.

GLOSSARY

The definitions that follow were developed to clarify terms and concepts as used in this rubric only.

- Academic Knowledge: Disciplinary learning; learning from academic study, texts, etc.
- Content: The information conveyed in the work samples or collections of work.
- Contexts: Actual or simulated situations in which a student demonstrates learning outcomes. New and challenging contexts encourage students to stretch beyond their current frames of reference.
- Cocurriculum: A parallel component of the academic curriculum that is in addition to the formal classroom (student government, community service, residence hall activities, student organizations, etc.).
- Experience: Learning that takes place in a setting outside of the formal classroom, such as a workplace, service learning site, or internship site.
- Form: The external frameworks within which information and evidence are presented, ranging from choices for a particular work sample or collection of works (such as a research paper, PowerPoint presentation, video recording, etc.) to choices in the make-up of the e-portfolio.
- Performance: A dynamic and sustained act that brings together knowing and doing (creating a painting, solving an experimental design problem, developing a public relations strategy for a business, etc.); performance makes learning observable.
- Reflection: A metacognitive act of examining a performance in order to explore its significance and consequences.
- Self-Assessment: Describing, interpreting, and judging a performance based on stated or implied expectations followed by planning for further learning.