# Depth of Learning (Conceptual Engagement)

**Deep learning is a slow growth of student development through the academic levels. Individuals engage with learning through three dimensions - reflective learning, higher order learning and integrative learning (Wang et al, 2014).**

**Overview**

Deep learning relates to the level of intellectual demand within what students are expected to be able to do. As such, the focus should be on educational gain, as well as educational performance. Capabilities that are associated with deep learning include reflecting upon, synthesising, applying, critically evaluating and analysing. These capabilities should be directly expressed in the module learning outcomes and aligned with the module activities. Our [LBU taxonomy of assessment domains](https://teachlearn.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/-/media/files/clt/clttaxonomy_of_assessment_domains.pdf) based on Bloom's original work (who extensively contemplated the nature of thinking) can support you with this.

Deep learning involves students participating in the construction of their own knowledge, and is fostered through active learning processes, and by creating a learning environment that avoids passivity, for example, problem solving, researching, appreciating multiple perspectives, and working collaboratively. It is unlikely to be promoted when assessment only requires reproduction of, and/or memorising, content.

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| **Course teams could ask:*** To what extent do the module and course content achieve **balance between breadth and depth of study**? Could we slim down content to facilitate greater depth of learning?

When adapting your pedagogy, and if your course is becoming more blended, don’t simply take your traditional face to face approaches on-line. Instead, think about how you can facilitate deep learning in an online environment. **For example:** Studio practice for **arts courses** where tutors might engage in a range of conversations about students’ emergent work might work better as a series of very short focused synchronous sessions supported by asynchronous discussion/evaluation and critique;Simply live streaming a lecture you would give in class may not work so well or effectively in an online environment. Instead, prepare a set of short presentations to play, and take questions in breaks or note down student comments in the chat facility. * Students on more blended and online courses still need to be **engaged in deep thinking and deep critical learning**. How can you encourage engagement? What approaches do you use on this course to encourage student engagement via active, collaborative and applied learning? What tools can best be used to support this collaborative learning? IT Services (ITS) has produced some [useful guidance on tool selection](https://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/staffsite/-/media/files/staff-site/its/about-us/virtual-tool-guidance.pdf).
* How can your interactions **provoke deeper learning** during the time you are not in direct contact with the students? Can you flip lectures or require more prep before class with blended delivery? Provide more time for engaged students to discuss work? Ask groups to review journal articles and precis for a cohort or in an online journal club?
* Are there **opportunities for embedding research and practitioner-informed teaching**? Are there online and face to face opportunities for students **to explore ideas and concepts in depth**? Are the students being [**challenged**](https://teachlearn.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/the-learning-pathway/challenging-your-students/personalised-learning/)?
* In what ways does the student experience involve **progressively deepening learning over the levels of the course**? Resources are available to help you [**personalise learning for your students**](https://teachlearn.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/the-learning-pathway/challenging-your-students/personalised-learning/).
* Ensure all your **assessment methods and criteria require students to demonstrate deep learning**. Just focusing on the reproduction of module content does not promote deeper understanding of the subject. Are assessment criteria potentially unhelpful by (for example) requiring breadth at the expense of depth?
* Is there clear evidence of higher levels of **intellectual challenge and stimulation** in assessments and activities as students progress through the levels, and are [expectations consistent within each level](https://teachlearn.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/teaching-and-learning/assessment/#taxonomy-of-assessment)?
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**References**

References and further reading for this section can be found in the [Depth of Learning](https://rl.talis.com/3/beckett/lists/086BF37E-85D6-9E4A-D3A6-B7EA51D08C98.html?lang=en-US&login=1#9A3E2046-23FE-364B-95CA-451C58E3B74A) section of the [Course Development Principles reading list](https://beckett.rl.talis.com/lists/086BF37E-85D6-9E4A-D3A6-B7EA51D08C98.html) on Talis Aspire.