# Vertical and Horizontal Integration of Learning (Behavioural Engagement)

**This means that a course should be considered as a whole, rather than just a series of separate modular components. It means ensuring that there are course level learning outcomes. It also means ensuring that a student’s learning at different academic levels can be linked (vertically) and also that there are opportunities for themes and modules within one academic level to be thematically connected (horizontal integration). This helps underpin a cohesive student learning experience.**

**Overview**

A course is most effective when it has been holistically designed with the student’s learning journey in mind. A student’s understanding of their learning is deepened through this holistic approach.

Vertical connections are those that work up through levels of learning (Levels 4, 5 and 6 for undergraduates). These may be informed by themes within the course that connect the levels, whereby the deepening of the learning at each level is informed by our Undergraduate [Taxonomy of Assessment Domains](https://teachlearn.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/-/media/files/clt/clttaxonomy_of_assessment_domains.pdf).

Horizontal connections are those that interconnect within a level of learning (for example, just across Level 4). Ways to enhance horizontal connections might include mapping themes of learning and designing synoptic assessments. These can be implemented across modules within a level (see also [*Course Level Assessment Strategy*](#Course_Level_Assessment_Strategy)). Module learning outcomes and assessments should therefore be written with clear consideration for other modules at that level.

This should help students to make the links and connections between their modules across the course at whichever level they are on.

Vertical and horizontal mapping must be considered as part of good course design and development and should be clearly documented so it is meaningful for staff and students.

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| **Course teams could ask:*** How do our course design and pedagogical approaches encourage development of **learning across each level** *and* as the level of study increases?
* How might the design we choose or the pedagogical approaches we adopt enhance **integration of knowledge and thinking** for student learning? For example, flipped approaches ([Jenkins et al, 2017](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/315921558_Enhancing_the_Design_and_Analysis_of_Flipped_Learning_Strategies)) can vary the levels of teacher presence to enhance student autonomy and problem based ([Yew & Goh, 2016](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2452301116300062)) design can enhance critical thinking, holistic thinking and inquiry.
* ”Learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience” ([Kolb, 1984](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/235701029_Experiential_Learning_Experience_As_The_Source_Of_Learning_And_Development)), and can enhance the **synthesis and application of knowledge**. How is experiential learning threaded through your module design and learning activities at each level?
* If applicable, how have your **professional body requirements** and **subject benchmarks** informed the development of the course and how has this informed curriculum design?
* What opportunities do course teams have to ensure that the curriculum delivery is **effective and appropriate** for the needs of the student and avoids unnecessary duplication of learning activities and assessments? Is this delivery impacted by changes such as online teaching and assessment?
* Has the development and design of the course been **informed** by the [taxonomy of assessment domains](https://teachlearn.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/teaching-and-learning/assessment/#taxonomy-of-assessment) at each level?
* What **strategies** do staff use to explain horizontal and vertical integration to students? What are the best ways of doing this?
* Does the way you give [feedback](https://teachlearn.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/teaching-and-learning/feedback/) to students on their assessments give them the opportunity to **make links to content and ideas** addressed in other modules? Is the feedback phrased in a way that is [developmental](https://teachlearn.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/teaching-and-learning/feedback/) and encourages the student to think and improve?
* Have you devised and planned **learning themes** which entwine through every level which encapsulate the core nature of the course and can help with the application and integration of knowledge?
* Do the online and/or [flipped activities](https://teachlearn.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/teaching-and-learning/teaching-delivery/learn-about-different-teaching-delivery-methods/flipped-learning/) you provide **complement and seamlessly link** with the activities you might provide in a face to face environment?
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**References**

References and further reading for this section can be found in the [Vertical and Horizontal Integration of Learning](https://rl.talis.com/3/beckett/lists/086BF37E-85D6-9E4A-D3A6-B7EA51D08C98.html?lang=en-US&login=1#AAF5B19D-EC2B-368E-35C9-504000613CEC) section of the [Course Development Principles reading list](https://beckett.rl.talis.com/lists/086BF37E-85D6-9E4A-D3A6-B7EA51D08C98.html) Talis Aspire.