Evaluate Activity: 'Pick or Mix?'

Remember	Understand	Apply	Analyse	Evaluate	Create

"the ability to judge the value of material for a given purpose"
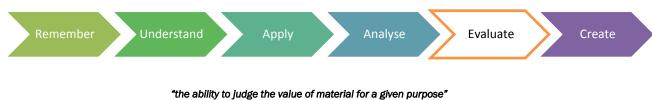*(Kennedy et al., n.d., pp. 12).*

Learning objective:

Students compare and contrast the value of given theories/strategies/solutions to a specific context.

Overview:

Each student is given responsibility for a particular theory/strategy. They must determine in what ways the theory/strategy may be useful, and it what ways it is not applicable/limited in a given situation/context. For example, Student 1 looks at Theory A, Student 2 looks at Theory B, Student 3 looks at Theory C and so on. The students then join their peers to compare theories/strategies, and their evaluations. They must work together to (you will need to specify one of these options):

- Determine whether one theory/strategy is of more value than the others OR are the theories/strategies are of equal value OR are the theories/strategies are of value in different ways?
- Rank the theories/strategies in order of relevance/usefulness/importance (e.g. from 1 being most important to three being least important).
- Choose one and only one strategy/theory.
- One of the above + add an alternative theory/strategy that they have read about elsewhere.

They must justify their decision (e.g. with a short presentation/spiel).

If you would prefer students to work as individuals, set students the task of evaluating one theory/strategy each week (always against the same context). Eventually, each student must determine whether some or all of the theories are of value, and they must justify their choice.

Example:

Students are provided with a scenario relating to a customer purchasing behaviour. Each student is provided with a text chapter introducing a particular customer behaviour theory. When the students group together, they must determine how the theories relate to the context, rank the theories in order of importance, and justify the ranking.

Reference: Kennedy, D., Hyland, A. & Ryan, N (n.d.). *Writing and Using Learning Outcomes: a Practical Guide.* Retrieved, June 4, 2015, from http://www.tcd.ie/teaching-learning/academic-development/assets/pdf/Kennedy_Writing_and_Using_Learning_Outcomes.pdf (from Trinity College Dublin, Trinity Teaching and Learning

FACE TO FACE VERSION

• Activity Description/Steps	Resources
- Briefly explain the purpose of the task and how students will complete the task. Include information about the context. - You will need at least two theories/strategies for students to work with, though three or more is preferable. **SCAFFOLDING TIP:** It may be useful to provide a *Rubric*, a checklist or a list of pertinent questions to help students determine the value of each theory/strategy. Modelling the process of comparing and contrasting theories/strategies (as they apply to a particular context) will also be helpful.	Slide or handout with basic instructions. Copies of each theory/strategy (unless students have ready access to their own devices or computers in the classroom).
- You can either provide students with time to do their individual reading/thinking in class (allow around 30 minutes, depending on the length or complexity of the associated readings), or set the individual reading and homework for sharing in the following class. - Remind students that they must bring a written/printed copy of their individual work to class.	If students do this as homework, you could get them to submit their theory/strategy and initial thoughts to a *Dropbox Folder* or *Discussion Topic* on MyLO by a specified deadline. This lends a sense of urgency to the task, as students know that you can see who has done the work. It also makes it easier to pick out certain examples to share in class.
Form students into groups. Be careful to mix students so that each group contains students who have reviewed different theories/strategies. They must compare their findings and work together to meet the desired requirement (see options, page 1). Remind students that they must be ready to justify their decision. Allow at least 15 minutes for this, depending on the number and complexity of theories/strategies to be discussed.	You may wish to place the instructions back up on screen. It could help to provide students with butchers paper and textas, or computer screens (if you have access to the TEAL lab), to jot down their ideas.
Allow at least 20 minutes at the end of the activity to contrast the decisions made by different groups. Prompt the groups to justify their positions. This is a good opportunity for you to point out any gaps in understanding, and reinforce important points.	Have the context and theories/strategies on screen, so you can easily refer to them during the discussion. A good method of getting a simple comparison is a show of hands. Then, you'll visually be able to see which groups had different opinions and to focus your discussion on those differences.

ONLINE VERSION	
PREPARATION IN MYLO	

- You will need to set up two *Group Categories*: *Idea Distribution*; and *Discussion Groups*. The *Idea Distribution Category* will be used to distribute the theories/strategies evenly amongst the students. If you have four theories/strategies, you will need to create four groups. The *Discussion Groups Category* will allow you to facilitate discussion about the theories/strategies between students. You must ensure that at least one student from each of the *Idea Distribution* groups is included in each *Discussion Group*. Unfortunately, you will have to enrol students manually, as MyLO cannot generate *Groups* based on other *Groups.*
- Upload PDFs or create *HTML Files* to represent each idea/theory. Create *Release Conditions* to release each document to the relevant *Idea Distribution Group*.
- Create one *Discussion Topic* for each *Discussion Group* (to save time, do this when you set up the *Discussion Groups Category*).

Activity Description/Steps	Resources
- Briefly explain the purpose of the task and how students will complete the task. Include information about the context. Students will need to be given two deadlines. - Give students an initial deadline by which they must read about/research the theory/strategy that they have been allocated, and post their initial thoughts about their summary. Allow about 3-5 days for this. - Provide students with a second deadline (allow about 7 – 12 days for this from commencement of the task). As a team, they must work together to meet your requirements (see options on page 1). A member of the group must represent their final decision by adding a post to their group *Discussion Topic* with a title like *Our group's final decision.* **SCAFFOLDING TIP:** Model what a good summary might look like/include. For example, you could include questions that students should respond to in this summary.	You could introduce the task with a brief video or a well written piece of text, perhaps in the form of an *HTML Page*.
- The day before the initial deadline, contact students who have not yet posted their work, to remind them of the deadline. - After the deadline has been reached, you may like to send out a *News Item*/email, perhaps highlighting some of your favourite posts (and tell students why they are your favourites) and reminding students about the next part of the task (second deadline).	At least one *Discussion Topic* will be required so students can share their work.
Two days before the second deadline, contact students who have not yet assisted with their groups' decision (e.g. they haven't posted since the first deadline). Remind them of the impending deadline, and that they should at least post to agree or disagree with the opinions expressed so far.	
Provide a summary of the submitted work, flagging the conclusions that different groups reached. If particular group members were very active/helpful, you may wish to thank them for their contributions, or perhaps their work in organising/moderating a group.	A *News Item*, or short video embedded in a *News Item* is a useful way of doing this.