Cognitive Affective Engagement Model (CAEM) of Learning From Multiple Texts

(List & Alexander, 2017)

Motivation:

Students are often assigned to write research papers on complex social issues using multiple sources from the Internet. Doing so requires them to process a large volume of information, connect information across sources, evaluate source quality, and synthesize information through writing.

Guiding Question:

Why do students put significant effort into some assignments, requiring the use of multiple texts, and not others?

Key Conclusions:

Students' processing of multiple texts, effort expenditure, and learning outcomes are determined by their:

A. Behavioral Dispositions - or skills in source evaluation and integration

B. Affective Engagement - or interest in and motivation for task completion

Jointly, these two dimensions give rise to four different default stances. Default stances are students' adopted orientations toward multiple text use.
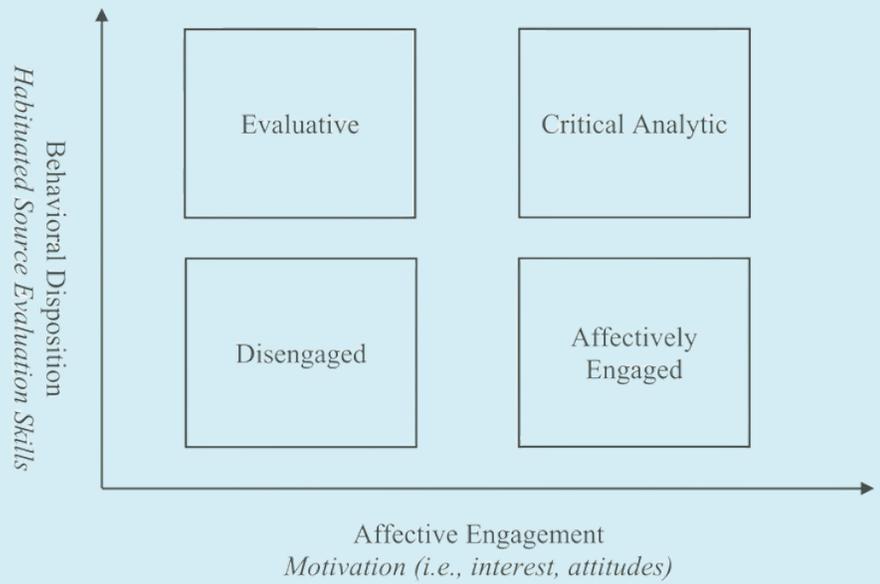
Default stances determine students' processing and outcomes when learning from multiple texts. For example, students who are affectively engaged may demonstrate high behavioral engagement with texts (e.g., accessing many texts) but may not evaluate or integrate new information learned. Students adopting a critical analytic default stance may both demonstrate extensive source use and evaluate and synthesize information read.

Evidence for the CAEM:

- List (2021) found students more interested in the topic of a multiple text tasks and reporting more frequent engagement in information evaluation to spend more time on text access and to engage in more cross-textual connection formation during reading, resulting in improved performance.
- Strømsø et al. (2020) used cluster analysis to identify disengaged, evaluative, and critical analytic profiles. Students adopting a critical analytic default stance evaluated texts using more varied criteria (i.e., considering content and source) and "switched" more between sources when writing.

Implications:

1. Introduce students to specific strategies for source evaluation and integration and habitually ask them to use these when learning from multiple texts

2. Select interesting, motivating, and engaging topics for multiple text tasks

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1. List, A. (2021). Investigating the cognitive affective engagement model of learning from multiple texts: A structural equation modeling approach. *Reading Research Quarterly, 56*(4), 781-817.

2. Strømsø, H. I., Bråten, I., & Brante, E. W. (2020). Profiles of warm engagement and cold evaluation in multiple-document comprehension. *Reading and Writing, 33*(9), 2337-2359.

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