Overview of 4MAT® Model of Instruction

The 4MAT Model of Instruction

4MAT is an open-ended learning model that offers teachers a method for broadening their delivery of instruction, and it specifically encompasses strategies that appeal to the diverse approaches students have to learning. This method requires that teachers break out of the traditional lecture approach to lesson design by using more active learning processes and strategies as well as the more reflective modes of teaching. The basic premise of 4MAT is that while students favor different places on the 4MAT cycle according to their styles, they all need to go through the four major steps when learning anything. This is illustrated in the following diagram. Students should understand:

Most schools focus on teaching students concepts (Step 2 of our model) with little regard to other fundamental questions:

- Why is it important?
- How can I use this in my life?
- What are the possibilities?
What is 4MAT?

We believe that successful learning combines all four of these elements. It begins through the creation of personal meaning for students, proceeds to conceptual understanding, application follows, and finally integration results. The learning styles of students result in varying levels of learner comfort as they move through the cycle. Students experience their most comfortable place, while being stretched to learn in ways that are more challenging for them.

4MAT offers teachers a framework for designing instruction that helps students:

- Construct their own meaning.
- Create meaningful, coherent representations of knowledge.
- Link new information with existing knowledge.
- Engage in an active process that allows opportunities for self-expression, group-work, discussions, applications of knowledge and personal, creative representations.
- Become critically involved in learning and to have input in the learning.
- Become more actively involved in the learning process.
- Represent knowledge in multiple ways.
What is 4MAT?

In addition to identifying the four major elements of learning (meaning, concepts, applications and creations), we believe that teachers need to use both left and right mode teaching strategies. Most schools emphasize left mode thinking. Left mode thinking is sequential, segmental, and essentially verbal. Even though verbal forms of instruction (in which teachers talk and students listen) are a major part of excellence in education, students also require other kinds of processing strategies.

These strategies are attributed to the right mode, synthesis-finding and creating spatial relationships, using images, perceiving wholes from collections of parts, hands-on explorations and many dimensions of nonverbal reasoning. In learning, it is the balance of both modes — so essential for excellence — that educators must seek.

Once right and left mode strategies (strategies that encourage students to both analyze and synthesize information) are added to the four quadrants, an eight step model emerges that is best summarized with the following eight words: Connect, Attend, Imagine, Inform, Practice, Extend, Refine, and Perform.
When teachers use the 4MAT instructional design, they develop the following skills in their students:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quadrant Four</th>
<th>Quadrant One</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Integrating and evaluating skills:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Focusing and generating skills:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verifying, explaining, summarizing, synthesizing, representing and refocusing</td>
<td>Observing, questioning, visualizing, imaging, inferring, diverging, brainstorming, listening and interacting.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quadrant Three</th>
<th>Quadrant Two</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Inquiring, exploring, and problem-solving skills:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Patterning, organizing and analyzing skills:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimenting, predicting, tinkering and recording</td>
<td>Seeing relationships, identifying parts, ordering, prioritizing, classifying and comparing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An effective instructional sequence requires learners to develop a broad range of skills. And by widening the methods for measuring and displaying learner performance, everyone has an equal chance to succeed in learning.