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Bernard Lonergan, S.J. (1904-1984) proposed a cognitonal theory of the mental activities by which human beings come to know anything in any practical or academic field. His Generalized Empirical Method proceeds by way of reflection on our consciousness of what we know and, simultaneously, of our knowing it. The GEM seeks insight into the dynamics of our cognitive activities on both a theoretical and a personal level. It promotes a discipline of self-appropriation that can engender a progressive transformation of our awareness of ourselves as knowers and the world we seek to make intelligible. (See the transcendental precepts.) It offers a basis for understanding our development as intelligent persons and professionals and fosters the professional values of active lifelong learning, reflective practice, and interprofessional dialogue.

AOTA’s Philosophy of Occupational Therapy Education

“(A)ctive learning ...engages the learner in a collaborative process that builds on prior knowledge and experience and integrates professional academic knowledge, experiential learning, clinical reasoning, and self-reflection. Occupational therapy education promotes integration of philosophical and theoretical knowledge, values, beliefs, ethics, and technical skills for broad application to practice for those individuals with and without impairments and limitations.” (Haynes & Jones, 2007, p. 129)