

**Student Learning Outcomes of the
General Education Program at
University of Wisconsin – La Crosse**
(Draft 3/31/03)

The General Education Committee has identified six areas of competencies for students who complete the General Education Program at UW – L. These competencies represent skills, knowledge, and habits of mind that help students become life-long learners. These competencies will be developed as they engage in coursework and other experiences that represent a broad liberal arts education. The competency areas include:

- Effective Communication
- Critical Thinking Skills
- Content Knowledge and the Ability to Integrate Knowledge
- Aesthetic Perspective
- Global Perspective and an Understanding of Diversity
- Responsible Citizenship and Ethical Decision Making

The outcomes are defined on the following pages.

Effective Communication Defined: Components And Outcomes

(Revised 12/13/02)

Upon completion of the General Education program at UW – La Crosse, a student will be able to demonstrate effective Communication skills. Communication skills encompass the following components:

- Listening
- Speaking
- Reading
- Writing

Speaking and Writing

Students will be able to:

1. State (both in oral and written form) an idea/argument and develop it in logical, organized form, using acceptable grammar, punctuation, and other appropriate mechanics
2. Adopt an appropriate tone, voice, and level of formality relevant to the audience, context, purpose, genre, etc.
3. Summarize the main ideas from an oral or written presentation
4. Use appropriate examples and details in developing and supporting ideas
5. Identify and evaluate sources of information for use in oral and written presentation
6. Reference information using styles appropriate to a discipline
7. Identify and use discipline specific writing and speaking conventions, skills, etc.
8. Use appropriate technologies to create professional presentations and documents
9. Identify and use technological tools and resources appropriate to the situation or task
10. Use etiquette, language, tone, etc. appropriate for audience while using technological tools (e-mail, internet, etc.)
11. Represent quantitative information or data in tables, charts or graphs
12. Use symbols that accurately represent ideas, hypotheses or expressions in a discipline
13. Distinguish between the various modes of discourse (expository, descriptive, narrative, argumentative, persuasive) and be able to determine when it is appropriate to use each
14. Show evidence of creativity in oral and written expression

Listening and Reading

Students will be able to:

1. Comprehend and summarize the main ideas from an oral or written presentation
2. Identify evidence and supporting ideas
3. Recognize the logic and the structure found in oral and written prose
4. Evaluate critically ideas from written and oral sources (comprehend, synthesize, apply, form opinions, and make appropriate decisions based on information in oral and written texts)
5. Explain how the content of an oral or written text is related to the context in which it was produced
6. Identify both stated and implied ideas
7. Identify biases and assumptions of a speaker or writer
8. Interpret tables, charts and graphs
9. Interpret a variety of “texts” which may include “print,” “video,” “dramatic,” “musical,” “visual,” “graphic,” texts, etc.
10. Identify creative aspects in a variety of oral and written texts

Critical Thinking: Components And Outcomes Defined

(Revised 12/02/02)

Upon completion of the General Education program at UW – La Crosse, a student will be able to demonstrate effective Critical Thinking skills. Critical Thinking encompasses the following components:

- Problem-solving
- Analytical skills
- Quantitative Skills

Problem-Solving

Students will be able to:

1. Define the problem using accurate terminology within a discipline
2. Identify what is known and what information or evidence is needed
3. Identify appropriate resources for gathering more data or information
4. Consider multiple perspectives when exploring a problem or issue
5. Recognize the difference between primary and secondary information sources
6. Organize information, ideas, data, and hypotheses
7. Develop and/or gather evidence or further information using appropriate searching skills
8. Evaluate the credibility and relevance of information from a variety of sources, including the internet
9. Suggest possible solutions using valid information or logical arguments
10. Detect errors, biases, assumptions, omissions, and fallacies in arguments and sources of information
11. Select and implement an appropriate problem-solving strategy (using appropriate tools/approaches for the discipline(s))
12. Evaluate effectiveness of a solution

Analytical Skills

Students will be able to:

1. Compare and contrast different modes of inquiry or methodology from various disciplines
2. Recognize the appropriate application for a given type of inquiry or methodology
3. Organize information or data into appropriate and meaningful categories or structures
4. Evaluate content in terms of the context in which it was created
5. Compare and contrast the evidence, logic and/or arguments supporting or refuting a “thesis”
6. Pose appropriate and meaningful problems that reflect issues within or across disciplines
7. Synthesize information from divergent sources and viewpoints and draw reasonable inferences and/or conclusions
8. Formulate an opinion and defend using valid information, evidence or arguments
9. Detect patterns or systems underlying organizations, disciplines and/or structures
10. Perceive and understand relationships or make inferences
11. Distinguish between inferences and observations
12. Identify and question assumptions

Quantitative Reasoning Skills

Students will be able to:

1. Interpret information given in the form of formulas, graphs, tables, and schematics, and draw inferences from them.
2. Represent mathematical information symbolically, visually, numerically, and verbally. Use mathematical methods to solve problems.
3. Estimate and check answers to mathematical problems in order to determine reasonableness, identify alternatives, and select optimal results.
4. Recognize that mathematical methods have limits.
5. Distinguish between relevant and irrelevant data
6. Predict outcomes from analysis of data/information

Content Knowledge and the Integration of Knowledge

(Approved at the 3/03/03 meeting of the GEC)

Upon completion of the General Education program at UW – La Crosse, students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of the following content areas:

- the life and physical sciences
- the humanities and the arts
- the social sciences
- mathematics
- health and well-being

This understanding will be demonstrated as students:

1. Identify fundamental/foundational principles, theories, concepts, and issues within the discipline
2. Identify and describe common methodologies and tools used in a discipline
3. Use the methodologies or tools to replicate or create new knowledge /artifacts
4. Identify ways that disciplines influence or rely upon one another in our natural, physical, and social world
5. Articulate limitations to knowledge in these disciplines (what is known, what is not known)
6. Identify possible strategies for increasing understanding in that discipline
7. Identify and evaluate important bibliographic and electronic resources that pertain to this discipline
8. Evaluate information from a variety of sources that relate to/inform others about this field
9. Explain how this information is relevant to both our daily lives and our society

INTEGRATION OF KNOWLEDGE

Upon completion of the General Education program at UW-La Crosse, students will demonstrate the ability to integrate knowledge as they:

1. Apply the skills and knowledge learned in one discipline to solving problems, gaining new experiences, or creating new things in other disciplines
2. Articulate *how* the content or form of a text, theory, interpretation, composition, or complex system is shaped by the contexts within which it was created
3. Explain *why* this contextual awareness is important
4. Identify the various interdependent components of both humanly created complex systems (e.g., economies, civilizations and cultures, computer networks) and complex systems in nature (e.g., ecosystems)
5. Recognize how the intricate components of a system form an integrated whole
6. Explain *how* the various components of a complex system operate to influence its behavior, change it, or maintain it in a state of equilibrium

Aesthetic Perspective
(approved at the 2/17/03 GEC meeting)

Upon completion of the General Education program at UW – La Crosse, a student will be able to:

1. Identify major artistic traditions in multiple art forms across culture and over time.
2. Evaluate and discuss artistic presentations using the language and patterns of thought inherent in the particular art form.
3. Recognize and discuss human creativity and diverse forms of aesthetic expression in multiple disciplines.
4. Discern the impact and role of artistic and literary achievement in society and one's personal life.
5. Recognize and discuss the role of the arts as critical commentaries on society and the human condition.

Global Perspective and Understanding Diversity
(Update from GEC 3/31/03)

After completing the General Education Program at UWL students will demonstrate a global perspective and an understanding of diversity.

A Global Perspective will be demonstrated by students' ability to:

1. Assess and articulate their own knowledge about the world and identify strategies for developing awareness of others
2. Explain how economic, historical, political, social, cultural, technological, educational, and/or environmental factors affect the well-being of peoples, cultures, societies, and diverse groups throughout the world
3. Explain what globalization is and how it shapes modern society.
4. Analyze similarities and differences between their own and other cultures, and how these similarities and differences affect one's perceptions, beliefs, and behavior
5. Describe how a person's historical and cultural context influence perceptions of themselves and others
6. Identify the beliefs, biases, and/or political views that may be embedded within a document, artifact, or event(s)
7. Identify significant factors that have made the modern world what it is today.

Understanding diversity will be demonstrated by a student's ability to:

1. Identify contributions that diverse cultures, groups, and individuals have made to local, state, national, and global society
2. Describe how race, gender, sexual orientation, class, and religious affiliation have shaped people's cultural outlooks as well as how they have been perceived by others

Responsible Citizenship and Ethical Decision Making

Draft (03/12/03)

Upon completion of the General Education program at UW – La Crosse, students will be able to demonstrate the beginning of Responsible citizenship and Ethical Decision Making. Components of this outcome include:

- Personal, academic, community, and global values
- Civic engagement
- Ethical Decision Making

Students will demonstrate *Personal, academic, community, and global values as they:*

1. Articulate their own personal values and how these differ from the value system of others.
2. Identify cultural, historical, economic, religious, and other factors that help create and influence their own values and the values of a culture/society.
3. Interact respectfully with others different from oneself
4. Show tolerance for ambiguity
5. Question their own assumptions and respectfully question the assumptions of others
6. Respond empathically toward the situation of others
7. Practice and uphold standards of academic integrity and intellectual honesty
8. Articulate current ethical issues as they relate to scientific and technological development, and other areas such as social, political, and economic policy
9. Identify the assumptions and logic that result in moral judgments of people from other ethnic/cultural backgrounds

Students will demonstrate **Civic Engagement** as they:

1. Pursue inquiry with intellectual curiosity and openness to new ideas
2. Identify the elements and responsibilities of citizens in a democratic society
3. Explain the importance of participation in the democratic process
4. Participate in campus and community events and in the democratic process
5. Suggest possible explanations for and solutions to social, political, or economic issues
6. Identify their own strategies for involvement, leadership, and citizenship
7. Explain how individuals, communities and organizational (political, economic, social, educational, etc.) structures may contribute to the depletion or preservation of local, national, and global resources
8. Identify strategies to increase their awareness and knowledge of social justice and injustice

Students will demonstrate **Ethical Decision Making** as they:

1. Articulate the process or strategies they use to make ethical decisions
2. Compare and contrast the possible outcomes of situations based on different decisions
3. Compare and contrast ethical principles and decision making from various perspectives
4. Apply their knowledge of ethics to practical situations in their own or other disciplines or human situations
5. Argue logically and persuasively why they believe that their particular decision was ethically sound
6. Make thoughtful choices in personal lifestyle and evaluate the consequences of those choices
7. Analyze the impact their decisions and choices have on others.
8. Respect diverse perspectives and approaches to ethical issues or problems