

Thinking About Teaching and Learning Through the New GEP Lens

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The part of a liberal education curriculum that is shared by all students. It provides broad exposure to multiple disciplines and forms the basis for developing important intellectual, civic, and practical capacities. General education can take many forms, and increasingly includes introductory, advanced, and integrative forms of learning.

What is General Education?

Why change the GDRs at UWSP?

GDRs

- * Little logic to the distribution of credits, particularly as it connected to a student's major area of study.
- * Students did not understand why they were required to take classes in particular categories and how they were related to a student's path of study.
- * Faculty and advisors frequently viewed the GDRs as things to "get out of the way" and disconnected from the student's major or pre-professional education. Students, therefore, failed to see connections between general education at the university level and vocational training.
- * The number of credits was perceived as a heavy load, particularly as bottlenecks existed in some categories (such as Writing Emphasis).

GEP

- * Identical GEP, regardless of major
- * First Year Seminar created for uniform introduction to university education, regardless of path of study
- * Credit limits imposed if students do not take Foundation Level requirements before 60 credits
- * Clear progression from foundation to investigation to integration levels
- * GEPs are also "in-the-major"

Liberal Education and America's Promise

- * Association of American Colleges and Universities and LEAP (Liberal Education and America's Promise)
- * National Leadership Council's College Learning for the New Global Century (2007)
- * Essential Learning Outcomes: critical for a globally engaged democracy, dynamic, innovation-fueled economy, and development of individual capability
- * Deliberate break with academic categories in favor of "aims and outcomes" important to students in all fields
- * Integrates first general university student better than traditional liberal education
- * Discover connections between disciplines
- * Emphasizes knowledge, intellectual and practical skills, personal and social responsibility, integrative and applied learning

GEP at UWSP Effective Catalog Term 201320

- * High Impact Practices including, common intellectual experiences, learning communities, research
- * Learning outcomes approach is uniform across curriculum
- * Program progresses in challenge – both in skill and knowledge level
- * Student engagement in material through application, writing, service learning

Incorporate “The Principles of Excellence”

- * Set high standards
- * Create a plan of study for each student
- * Immerse students in analysis, discovery, problem solving and communication from the beginning to end
- * Engage big picture (global, cultural)
- * Connect knowledge, choices and action
- * Foster civic, intercultural and ethical learning
- * Assess students’ ability to apply learning

Class Design that Foster Assessment for the New GEP

- * Determine what kind of 'level' course is intended to be: who is the target audience?
- * Decide on the Learning Outcomes to be attained (critical thinking or broad knowledge? Personal accountability or global citizenship?)
- * Backward design of class assignments
- * Transform the syllabus to reflect readings and assignments that support and reflect learning outcomes
- * Graduation of depth and comprehensiveness of skill or knowledge in evaluation

How to expand the course to the wider LEAP goal

- * Learning outcomes are not subject specific
- * Think about broad definitions of disciplines
- * Team teach or create interdisciplinary experiences
- * Introducing vs. mastering skills
- * Incorporating service or applied learning
- * Capstone experience to demonstrate progression of learning