Baccalaureate review goal development teams

Three teams were composed in early spring 2010 to propose measureable and meaningful learning goals based on the Three Cs of creativity, critical thinking, and communication. Context was not considered as a separate goal. Instead, goal development teams were instructed to consider context as the foundation for all goal discussions and proposals.

Steering committee members led the goal development teams with support from task force members and other interested individuals.

Goal Development Teams		
Creativity	**Critical thinking**	**Communication**
*Jeff Kowalski (leader)** Art	*David Changnon (leader)** Geography/Provost's Office	*David Gorman (leader)** English
Sinclair Bell* Art	David Ballantine* Chemistry	Anne Birberick* Foreign Languages & Literatures
Glenda Cosenza* Music	Sinclair Bell* Art	Jeff Chown Communications
Amy Franklin* Planning & Assessment	Brad Broughton* Student	Samantha Fisher* Public Administration

Goal Development Teams (cont.)		
Creativity	**Critical thinking**	**Communication**
Elisa Fredericks* Marketing	Paul Crawford* Community College Relations	Kerry Freedman* Art Education
Ed Klonowski* Music	Barbara Fouts* Career Services	Janice Hamlet* Communication
Jeanette Rossetti Nursing & Health Studies	Wendell Johnson* Libraries	Deb Pierce* International Programs
Donna Smith* Catalog Editor	Murali Krishnamurthi* Faculty Development	Norm Stahl Literacy Education
Matt Streb Political Science	Mary Pritchard* Health and Human Sciences	Laura Vazquez Communications
	Pam Rosenberg* International Programs	
	Jim Schmidt* History	
	Joel Stafstrom Biology	
	Lucy Townsend* Leadership, Ed. Psych & Foundations	
* Baccalaureate review task force members		

March 23, 2010

Baccalaureate review goal development team proposals

Critical thinking team proposals

- We felt that "critical thinking" involved three primary **skills**:
    o *Read* for comprehension
    o Ability to *write* effectively
    o *Scientific method (inquiry)*…which involved six steps:
        ▪ Find (e.g., through a literature search)
        ▪ Evaluate (e.g., against a set of meaningful questions)
        ▪ Test (evaluate data/information)
        ▪ Interpret analyses
        ▪ Reflect on results
        ▪ Apply new knowledge to problems

- However to successfully complete critical thinking (especially the inquiry part) one must have **knowledge** (or context) in areas such as diversity, multiculturalism, social, historical, economic, political, etc.

Overall, many great ideas came from our discussions in regards to critical thinking and how we would want to approach it from an academic and student affairs perspectives. Although we were unable to identify a set of "firm" goal statements we did agree on some general thoughts/ideas that may be useful to others as this process continues. For the six points listed under the scientific method (inquiry) above we have developed or found these goal statements (i.e., learning outcomes) that may or may not be appropriate:

Find:
- Read and comprehend high-level content.
- Determine when information is needed and find it efficiently using a variety of reference sources.
- Understand and apply information from complex documents of general interest.
- Identify new information that might support or contradict a hypothesis.

Evaluate:
- Evaluate the quality of the information.
- Analyze and evaluate information used in their chosen area of study (major).
- Separate factual information from inferences (e.g., critically evaluate information received from several sources; science versus pseudoscience).

- Separate relevant from irrelevant information (e.g., evaluate claims of in terms of clarity, credibility, reliability, and accuracy).
- Evaluate various perspectives on an issue, culture, or technology
- Use information effectively for an appropriate purpose.

Test:
- Understand the limitations of correlational data (through appropriate analyses).
- Use mathematical/statistical skills to address questions (quantitative reasoning).

Interpret Analyses:
- Interpret numerical relationships in graphs.
- Identify alternative interpretations for data and observations.
- Demonstrate the ability to identify and communicate results of analyses.
- Critically analyze personal and professional assumptions, utilizing creative and independent thought processes.
- Evaluate evidence and identify inappropriate conclusions.

Reflect on Results:
- Identify and evaluate theses and conclusions, stated and unstated assumptions, and supporting evidence and arguments (i.e., identify new information that might support or contradict a hypothesis).
- Apply these skills to one's own work and the work of others.
- Collaborate in ongoing dialogue and debate with instructor and classmates regarding ethical dilemmas.

Apply:
- Reflect upon and apply newfound knowledge to a variety of problems (i.e., integrate information to solve problems).
- Write clearly and persuasively (communicate ideas effectively).
- Use information effectively for an appropriate purpose.
- Use information ethically and legally.

Explain how new information can change a problem

Communication team proposals

At minimum, an NIU grad should

1) control the basics of the written and spoken language, including such things as grammar, pronunciation, spelling, and the pertinent mechanics and conventions of formal utterance;

2) and possess the ability to comprehend a wide range of nontechnical writings (and other texts), to respond to them critically, and to utilize the information they represent.

Beyond this, however, a graduate should demonstrate mastery of English,

3) specifically in the mode of persuasion or argument--in the ability to develop a thesis, to find evidence that supports it, and to link this evidence to the thesis in a plausible, logical way;

4) as well as in the attainment of a level of mature, sophisticated expression, reflected in such linguistic qualities as good usage, clear organization, and smoothly connected discourse;

5) and also in possessing a sensitivity to such factors as differing audiences, situations, and goals of communication, prerequisite to the ability to adapt one's discourse to varying contexts.

Additional attainments should include the following.

6) An ability to communicate in an environment where English is not the sole (or even primary) language, or where the cultural context is unfamiliar. *[✍ Needs work.]*

7) Facility with nonverbal media, whether as speaker or listener, writer or reader, specifically in the ability to utilize the full range of available technologies effectively and appropriately in communication.

8) an NIU grad will value good communication, not only as a skill to be acquired and used, and as a basic necessity of civilized life, but as a process that results in products--literary and other works--that can and should be appreciated in their own right as lifelong sources of value.

Additional suggested communication goals submitted by task force members include:

[KNOWLEDGE] At a minimum, an NIU graduate should:

1)   comprehend complex expression in multiple modes of communication, such as linguistic, visual, and numerical, and understand their bases for judgments of quality;

2)   control the basics of written and spoken English, including grammar, pronunciation, spelling, and the pertinent mechanics and conventions of formal utterance;

3)   respond critically to both discursive and non-discursive modes of communication, and utilize the information they represent.

4)   demonstrate sufficient sensitivity to contextual factors, such as differing audiences, situations, and goals of communication.

[MASTERY] Beyond this, a graduate should demonstrate mastery of English,

5)   be adept at persuasion or argument, to develop a thesis, find evidence that supports it, and present it in a plausible, logical way;

6)   attain a level of mature, sophisticated expression, reflected in such linguistic qualities as good usage, clear organization, and smoothly connected discourse.

[APPLICATION] In addition, a graduate should:

7)   adapt successfully to communication in an environment that is culturally foreign, as for example by possessing college-level proficiency in a second language;

8)   use multiple modes of communication appropriately and effectively, as creator or audience, and utilize the full range of available technologies in communication;

(Stated as a disposition, this goal is measurable)

9)   demonstrate a disposition to value civil communication and appreciate communicative products in their own right as historical and lifelong sources of human interaction.

Creativity team proposals

Emphasize that the 'concept of creativity represents the higher order types of learning that

a university education should promote and expect at every level and in multiple contexts.'

Areas within which the specific objectives might be housed:

— Problem-solving/generating solutions

— Designing and Implementing

— Synthesizing

— Assessing/Evaluating Competing Positions

— Combining knowledge to develop new concepts

—Students will be able to reflect on and synthesize materials/information

—Students will transform information into new, different, unique solutions, ways of thinking, or procedures

—Students will generate solutions based on and designed to accommodate conditions

1) Students will look at a problem and consider and propose new ways to solve it (responses will be assessed on the extent to which they are "inventive" and "effective")

2) Students will be able to recognize problems and develop ways to solve those problems

3) Students will demonstrate knowledge of the parameters of a problem, issue, or process and be able to propose solutions, modifications, or new approaches.

4) Students will be able to synthesize knowledge (content and methods) relevant to a particular discipline or issue and apply it to develop new solutions, interpretations, procedures, projects, performances, exhibitions, etc.

5) Students will design or plan and implement a program, activity, presentation, project, or performance

6) Students will generate multiple ideas, perspectives, observations related to particular questions or issues

7) Students will discuss current knowledge, methods, or applications.

8) Students will be able to combine knowledge bases and skill sets to develop innovative concepts or projects.

9) Students will explain (understand, develop insights into, imagine) how context(s) (natural, social, cultural) affect knowledge and experience

10) Students will develop leadership skills/qualities by directing small group or class discussions

11) Students will design and produce course materials

12) Students will assess each other's and their own coursework/performance (by developing set of standards or rubric)

13)   Students will be able to defend a position/proposition from opposite (or multiple) perspectives.

14)   Students can synthesize key concepts related to a particular problem, issue, or field of study as demonstrated through a paper, project, or performance

15)   Students can articulate and assess competing positions, perspectives, theories, designs.

In addition to the proposed goals, the task force developed the following purpose statement to contextualize the goals:

Purpose Statement

NIU undergraduates develop competencies in critical thinking, communication, and creativity by participating in an engaged learning environment to prepare for success in a diverse, global society.

Goals must be developed with context in mind.

The following context goals were submitted by an individual task force member:

BRTF member feedback re context: I agree that communicating successfully across cultural boundaries [...] could certainly be considered a global learning outcome. However, other skills and knowledge that typically are included in a set of such outcomes really don't quite seem to fit into "communication," except in the sense that they may be what students would want to communicate about. If improving the level of knowledge about the world is important for us in the baccalaureate review process, where would possible outcomes such as these belong?

[Students will demonstrate...]

--knowledge of world history, world literatures, regional and/or cultural geography, world economics.

--the ability to analyze/discuss any given event from more than one cultural viewpoint.

--the ability to acquire information from a variety of sources regarding diverse regions, countries, languages, and cultures.

--mastery of methods to assess critically global events, trends, and issues.

--understanding of the interconnectedness of political, economic, and environmental systems.

--an awareness of the elements of their own culture and of how these influence interaction with others.

[Also, students will...]

--analyze the effects of world economic globalization on local culture(s).

I would like to suggest that, if we want our graduates to be prepared through our new baccalaureate program to function appropriately and productively in the world of the 21st century, some of the skills and knowledge outcomes listed above need to be represented somewhere within our report. Is "communication" the appropriate venue? I'm not sure, although "context" would have been perfect. But I hope we can include some of these skills and knowledge in the final report. [...]