

Synthesis: A pathway to intentional learning at Western Carolina University

Learning Goals and Outcomes

The overarching goal is to empower students to **integrate** knowledge and skills from their academic and co-curricular experiences to become **intentional** participants in their own learning. To that end, WCU hopes to impact students' **understanding of self, intellectual flexibility and versatility, and capacity for integrated learning**. As a result, WCU expects students to:

1. identify their aptitudes, abilities, and interests and articulate their future goals and aspirations;
2. modify their behaviors and values in response to knowledge and skills gained from their academic and co-curricular experiences; and
3. recognize the synthesis of their university experiences relative to their future education and career plans.

To achieve the expected learning goals, WCU has identified a set of core skills and behaviors (outcomes) that are central to a student's development as an **integrated, intentional learner**. These core expectations include the ability to:

Integrate information from a variety of contexts – Students will make connections between personal interest and abilities, Liberal Studies, programs of study, general electives, and experiential learning opportunities, and other co-curricular activities; and relate the implications/value of these connections to 'real world' scenarios.

Solve complex problems – Students will identify the dimensions of complex issues or problems; analyze and evaluate multiple sources of information/data; apply knowledge and decision-making processes to new questions or issues; and reflect on the implications of their solution/decision.

Communicate effectively and responsibly – Students will convey complex information in a variety of formats and contexts; identify intended audience and communicate appropriately and respectfully.

Practice civic engagement – Students will identify their roles and responsibilities as engaged citizens by considering the public policies that affect their choices and actions; by recognizing commonalities and interdependence of diverse views/values; and by acting responsibly to positively affect public policy.

Clarify and act on purpose and values – Students will examine the values that influence their own decision making processes; take responsibility for their own learning and development in a manner consistent with academic integrity and their own goals and aspirations; intentionally use knowledge gained from learning experiences to make informed judgments about their future plans; and bring those plans into action.

The metarubrics are an attempt to provide clarity to the core skills and behaviors that are identified above as essential to the development of student as an integrated, intentional learner. The intent of the metarubrics is to:

- Identify and describe commonly shared expectations for learning for each outcome
- Represent how student learning should become progressively more complex over time
- Provide flexible criteria for making judgments about student work that might result from a wide range of learning opportunities
- Allow students to understand what is expected of them in terms of their learning at WCU

Integrate information from a variety of contexts [DRAFT]- Students will make connections between personal interest and abilities, general education, programs of study, general electives, experiential learning opportunities, and other co-curricular activities; and relate the implications/value of these connections to “real world” scenarios.

1		Emerging When prompted ...	Developing When prompted ...	Achieving Independently ...	Exemplary Independently ...
Making Connections	Between personal experiences and academic knowledge	identifies connections between personal experiences and closely related academic knowledge (i.e., facts, ideas, concepts, experiences)	infers differences and similarities between personal experiences and academic knowledge	selects relevant personal experiences from a variety of contexts (family, individual, social, etc.) to illustrate academic knowledge	synthesizes connections between personal experiences and academic knowledge to expand own abilities and perspectives
	Between/across academic disciplines	refers to academic knowledge from more than one discipline or field of study	connects academic knowledge from more than one discipline or field of study	connects academic knowledge from more than one discipline or field of study	synthesizes academic knowledge from more than one discipline or field of study to draw a conclusion or resolve a problem
	Application/ Transfer	applies basic academic knowledge and/or personal experiences gained in one context to a new situation	uses academic knowledge and/or personal experiences gained in one context to deepen understanding of a problem or issue in a new situation	uses academic knowledge and/or personal experiences gained in one context to solve a problem or clarify an issue in a new situation	and creatively applies academic knowledge and/or personal experiences gained in one context to solve difficult problems or clarify complex issues in a new situation
	Self-Awareness/ Reflection	describes own performance as a learner	articulates own strengths and challenges as a learner in dealing with a specific task, performance, event, etc.	evaluates how own performance as a learner has changed over time and in different contexts	sets goals based on past personal and academic experiences in diverse contexts

¹ Adapted from AAC&U Integrated Learning Rubric

Solve Complex Problems- Students will identify the dimensions of complex issues or problems; analyze and evaluate multiple sources of information/data; apply knowledge and decision-making processes to new questions or issues; and reflect on the implications of their solution/decision.

	Emerging	Developing	Achieving	Exemplary
Define Problem	Identifies problem	Identifies aspects of problem	Considers problem from multiple perspectives	Articulates problem complexity
Identify Strategies	Gathers info relevant to problem	Identifies a strategy/approach	Identifies a viable strategy	Identifies multiple viable solutions
Application	Applies available or prescribed solution	Formulates and applies solution without consideration of strategy	Formulates and applies solution with consideration of strategy	Formulates multiple solutions applicable to each strategy
Reflection/Evaluation	Recognizes some effect of attempted solution	Evaluates the intended effect of solution	Evaluates intended and unintended effects of solution	Evaluates applicability of solutions to new problem

Communicate effectively and responsibly – Students will convey complex information in a variety of formats and contexts; identify intended audience and communicate appropriately and respectfully.

		Emerging	Developing	Achieving	Exemplary
Exchange of ideas	Information in	Recognizes that information is available in a variety of forms	Gathers information from a broad assortment of resources	Sorts and integrates information from a variety of sources	Evaluates the quality and credibility of information and selects appropriate information
	Information out	Recognizes that different types of information and ideas can be expressed differently	Conveys basic information in a variety of contexts	Conveys information and ideas in a tactful and considerate manner	Chooses communication techniques appropriate to the context and the audience
	Self-Assessment	Understands that self-assessment is important for the formulation of ideas	Demonstrates critical thinking in self- assessment	Uses self-assessment as a means to control expression and revision	Applies knowledge gained from utilizing diverse communication techniques in order to achieve life goals

Practice civic engagement –Students will identify their roles and responsibilities as engaged citizens by considering the public policies that affect their choices and actions; by recognizing commonalities and interdependence of diverse views/values; and by acting responsibly to positively affect public policy.

	Emerging	Developing	Achieving	Exemplary
Awareness and Participation	Recognizes that there are differences between civic engagement, community service, and service learning	Identifies how civic engagement intersects with interests	Selects and participates in civic engagement activities consistent with interests	Demonstrates leadership in chosen civic engagement activities
Value and Reflection	Recognizes the value of civic engagement for the community	Recognizes the value of civic engagement for personal enrichment	Considers how civic engagement activities affect the University, community, and student's educational experience	Considers how a change in behavior could affect the future of the University, community, and student's educational experience

Clarify and act on purpose and values - Students will examine the values that influence their own decision-making processes; take responsibility for their own learning and development in a manner consistent with academic integrity and their own goals and aspirations; intentionally use knowledge gained from learning experiences to make informed judgments about their future plans; and bring those plans into action.

	Emerging	Developing	Achieving	Exemplary
Identification and Development	Identifies values that influence decision making	Recognizes how values are shaped	Prioritizes values	Connects values with career and life plans
Self Awareness	Recognizes that behaviors have consequences	Acknowledges responsibility for behavior	Weighs the potential consequences of behavior(s)	Makes choices to achieve goals
Application of Knowledge	Chooses learning experiences consistent with values and goals	Develops future plans	Prioritizes necessary steps for progressing toward goals	Demonstrates how learning experiences affect goals
Knowledge in Action	Identifies necessary components of a curricular and co-curricular plan	Creates initial curricular and co-curricular plan consistent with goals	Makes necessary modifications to plan as goals are refined	Plans post-graduation actions to move forward with plan and goals