CHAPTER 3:
THE LIFELONG LEARNING AREA (L-1 - L-12)
&
Competence Criteria for Assessment

A. Goal Setting & Academic Planning (L-1, L-2)
B. Learning Skills (L-3, L-4, L-5, L-6 & L-7)
C. Research (L-8, L-9, L-10 & L-11, including Research Seminar and Externship)
D. Achievement & Review (L-12 Summit Seminar)

Overview

This portion of the undergraduate program includes competence statements that address the essential knowledge, skills, and abilities adults need to manage their own learning. The broad purpose of the Lifelong Learning (LL) area is to help you increase your capacity for self-directed learning and decrease your dependence on others in determining the purpose of learning and the direction of its progress. In addition to these long-term goals, the Lifelong Learning Area is designed to support your academic success within the SNL program. Though they are addressed individually in the program, the competence statements were written to interrelate, to build one upon the other, and to be continually developing throughout the student's experience at SNL.

For example, a cluster of the LL statements (L-4 through L-7) represent the fundamental skills and perspectives necessary for learning across a variety of settings (e.g., writing, critical thinking, quantitative reasoning). The essential communication and critical thinking skills you learn for these competencies enable your meaningful participation in addressing other LL competencies that focus on key learning processes (e.g., research, experiential learning). Similarly, you learn that the skills related to these learning processes complement and enrich one another. For example, skills learned relating to *collaborative learning* (L-7) may better equip you to engage in research, and thereby to rediscover the power of collaboration and to refine your understanding of its workings.

You must fulfill twelve competencies in this area. They are listed below in four groups:

- goal setting and academic planning (L-1, L-2 & F-1)
- learning skills (L-3, L-4, L-5, L-6 & L-7)
- research (L-8, L-9, L-10, L-11)
- achievement and review (L-12)

These competencies are achieved through SNL coursework or, in some cases, independent learning, identified below.

SECTION A. GOAL SETTING AND ACADEMIC PLANNING (L-1, L-2, & F-1)

L-1: **Can use independent learning skills and strategies to organize, initiate, and document prior, current, and future college-level learning.**
Course: LL 103 *Independent Learning Seminar*
1. Describe strategies for independent and experiential learning.
2. Use strategies to surface prior experiential learning in personal, professional, and academic settings and integrate these experiences with new learning.
3. Demonstrate skills in planning, organizing, assessing, and documenting competence -based learning.

Students demonstrate this competence through LL 103 *Independent Learning Seminar*.

L-2: **Can design learning strategies to attain goals for personal and educational development.**
Course: LL 250 *Foundations of Adult Learning*

1. Can articulate personal and educational goals and assess the gap between where one is and where one wants to be
2. Can identify learning interests and competencies to be developed and construct a plan for achieving personal and educational growth
3. Can describe one's self as a learner using one or more models of adult and/or experiential learning

Students demonstrate the L-2 and F-1 competencies by showing that they understand the educational philosophy and procedures of SNL in LL 250 *Foundations of Adult Learning* They apply this knowledge in developing an educational plan for attaining a Bachelor of Arts Degree relevant to their personal and educational goals.

F1: Can design a plan for development in one's Focus Area based on an analysis of elements that comprise the area.
Course: LL 250 *Foundations of Adult Learning*

1. Can set goals to be developed in the Focus Area
2. Can demonstrate an understanding of current issues and trends within the Focus Area through research (reading, interviews, and other forms of inquiry)
3. Can create a unified, well-articulated plan for achieving one's own Focus Area goals, based on research (reading, interviews, and other forms of inquiry)

SECTION B: LEARNING SKILLS (L-3, L-4, L-5, L-6, & L-7)

Instructors generally assess SNL courses in the LL area on a Pass/Fail basis. If you are interested in selecting a "grading option" for L-4 and/or L-5, you must request the letter grade in writing by informing the instructor, without exception, no later than the beginning of the third week of class. Before officially choosing the letter grade option, you should discuss with your instructor specific assessment criteria for letter grades. The instructor and you, the student, together determine which grading system will serve you best. If approved the switch to a letter grade cannot be undone. L-6: Quantitative Reasoning, and L-7: Collaborative Learning, are letter-graded.

L-3:   Can assess the social and personal value of civic engagement for achieving change.
1. Critically analyzes national or local civic issues from a systemic perspective.
2. Explains the impact an engaged citizen can make to improve the effectiveness of a society.
3. Articulates a strategy for personal civic engagement.
4. Engages in an activity that positively contributes to the civic life of a community.

Students demonstrate this competence by actively engaging with other community members in addressing an issue facing the community. The issue itself is analyzed to show an understanding of social and economic trends that shape the community. Given these systemic trends, the role of the individual in action with others is articulated with specific strategies for future involvement. Students develop and practice related skills by directly engaging in an activity that is of benefit to the civic life of a community. Activities can range from, but are not limited to, producing public art or participating in street theater, serving as the public advocate of a particular social group, getting involved in a justice campaign, contributing to public awareness

of an environmental issue, or participating in political meetings or events that address a particular social issue. SNL will not accept transfer courses for this competence but students may document learning through an ILP.

L-4: **Can write to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate experiences and concepts to demonstrate competencies. Course:** LL 260 *Writing for Competence* or proficiency exam.
1. Applies knowledge of academic writing conventions to demonstrate learning in a competence-based program
2. Demonstrates control over grammar, syntax, and punctuation
3. Understands writing as an iterative process and applies a variety of strategies for generating, revising, editing, and proofreading
4. Creates a plan for ongoing improvement of writing for academic, work, and personal communication including addressing problems and leveraging strengths.

Students demonstrate this competence through the Proficiency Exam or specific SNL courses. Students will continue to develop their writing skills throughout the program. SNL will not accept transfer courses for this competence.

Resources for Writing Support
In addition to the LL 260 Writing for Competence and LL 270 Critical Thinking courses, there are ways to strengthen and support your writing progress. None of these is meant as a substitute for Writing for Competence or Critical Thinking courses, but can augment your ongoing work in writing.

LL 140 Writing Workshop is an SNL course that offers individualized writing instruction for students at any point in their studies. Students have taken Writing Workshop to prepare for Writing for Competence, as additional support when enrolled in a writing-intensive course, to finish an incomplete, and to work on Independent Learning Pursuits (ILPs), Externship and Advanced Project. In collaboration with their instructor, each student develops and implements a plan to improve his or her writing. Students can earn the H-3-J competence in this course. They are also encouraged to use the Workshop to work on papers for competence in other courses or through the ILP process.

The Writing Guide for SNL Students (https://snlapps.depaul.edu/writing/) offers help with organizing ideas, managing the process of writing, grammar, citing sources, avoiding plagiarism, examples of common SNL assignments, and much more.

DePaul's Writing Center offers individual tutorial sessions and writing support. This service is located at the Loop and Lincoln Park campuses and is free to DePaul students. Students can email papers to the Writing Center and a tutor will provide feedback. Students may set up a schedule of regular meetings with the same tutor. The Writing Center also runs writing groups at SNL's suburban campuses. Call Loop (312 362 6726) or Lincoln Park (312 325-7000 ex, 1805) or check the Center website at: http://condor.depaul.edu/~writing/. The website includes links to other writing-related sites on the Internet.

SNL students are strongly encouraged to complete at least one core SNL writing course (Writing Workshop or Writing for Competence) or the L4 Writing Portfolio Proficiency Exam within their first three terms to help ensure their success in SNL's writing intensive program. To register for one of the courses, students must first complete the SNL Writing Placement process, which is a 10-question self-assessment located in Campus Connect under Main Menu->Self Service->Admissions->Next Steps->SNL

Writing Placement. Questions can be directed to snlwriting@depaul.edu or to the student's advisor or mentor.

L-5: **Can analyze issues and reconcile problems through critical and appreciative thinking.**
Course: LL 270 *Critical Thinking* or proficiency exam.
1. Analyzes, critiques, and evaluates different forms and level of thinking and reasoned discourse.
2. Constructs well-reasoned arguments in the context of real-life experiences and issues

Students demonstrate this competence by applying the elements of reasoning and critical thinking. Students will be able to critique as well as construct arguments by analyzing and creating claims, appropriate reasons, and rebuttals. Students will also analyze the audience and address a variety of points of view. Students may demonstrate this competence through the *Critical Thinking* course or the Critical Thinking Proficiency Exam. SNL will not accept transfer courses as fulfillment of this competence. Students should continue to develop their critical thinking skills throughout the program.

L-6: **Can use mathematical symbols, concepts, and methods to describe and solve problems.**

Course: LL 205 *Quantitative Reasoning,* proficiency exam or Transfer Course
1. Can apply mathematics or statistics to describe relationships between events in one's life.
2. Can explain how one's perspectives are influenced by mathematical language or reasoning.
3. Can interpret data, charts, and graphs.
4. Can solve problems using mathematical or statistical techniques.
5. Can solve basic algebraic equations.
6. Can use basic statistical concepts to characterize data.

The demonstration of this competence should reflect the logic required to frame and solve problems using some form of mathematical symbols. This is open to algebra, probability, statistics, etc. The level must be beyond computational (arithmetic) skills. We encourage applications of such thinking processes to work and other situations.

L-7: **Can learn collaboratively and examine the skills, knowledge, and values that contribute to such learning.** SNL Course or Transfer Course
1. Participates in a learning project with others.
2. Applies collaborative learning skills, such as communication skills, skills of group dynamics, etc.
3. Reflects on one's ability to contribute to the collaborative learning process as characterized in at least one model or theory.

Students demonstrate this competence by working with others to develop common understandings around a shared agenda that leads to an assessable outcome. Collaborative learning is characterized by a willingness to explore the ideas and insights of others in an atmosphere of mutual respect, encouragement, and challenge. Essential to this competence is understanding the distinctions among collaboration, cooperation, and strategies of group dynamics.

| **Proficiency Testing**
Students wishing to test their level of skill in writing (L-4), critical thinking (L-5), and quantitative reasoning (L-6) can register for proficiency examinations in those areas. You may register for proficiency exams while enrolled in or upon completion of Foundations of Adult Learning.
See http://snl.depaul.edu under Student Resources |
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SECTION C: RESEARCH (L-8, L-9, L-10 & L-11)

Overview

The culmination of undergraduate education is the ability to define problems and address them comprehensively. At the School for New Learning, this ability is realized in the Advanced Project. In order to hone your skills, and to prepare you for this problem solving experience, you need to examine the processes and pitfalls of research.

Research can be divided into two basic elements: <u>what</u> you study, and <u>how</u> you study it. That is, the topic of your research and the methods you employ to find information. Success in problem solving depends on your ability to define a problem, to find relevant information, to assess the information, to use the information, and to understand how you yourself influence the research process. Therefore, the School has designed three experiences that address these areas: *Research Seminar*, *Externship*, and *Advanced Project*. **(**See the Focus Area, Chapter 5, for information about the Advanced Project.)

Instructors generally assess SNL courses in the LL area on a Pass/Fail basis. If you are interested in selecting a "grading option" for L-8, L-9, L-10, and L-11, you must request the letter grade in writing by informing the instructor, without exception, no later than the beginning of the third week of class. Before officially choosing the letter grade option, you should discuss with your instructor specific assessment criteria for letter grades. The instructor and you, the student, together determine which grading system will serve you best. If approved the switch to a letter grade cannot be undone.

Research Seminar

L-8: **Can pose questions and use methods of formal inquiry to answer questions and solve problems.**

L-9: **To be written by faculty/student**
  Course: LL 300 *Research Seminar* (pre-requisites: LL 250 *Foundations*, L-4 and L-5)
  1. Identifies focused and appropriate questions within a specified context.
  2. Reviews existing knowledge about the question and determines directions for additional inquiry.
  3. Designs methods of gathering and interpreting information to advance knowledge relevant to the question.
  4. Constructs a proposed research model.

  Students demonstrate this competence by actively pursuing knowledge that will contribute to answers or solutions for questions or problems of interest. To do so, students must develop a familiarity with the literature in relevant fields and assess its contributions to the question. From

this, students should identify needs for additional inquiry and create ways of learning more about the specific question. Students must draw connections between categories of learning in the undergraduate program and the nature of the research question. Completion of *Research Seminar* is a pre-requisite for *Advanced Electives* and *Advanced Project*.

The *Research Seminar* presents an opportunity to describe, locate, evaluate, and use information. Students meet regularly as with any other course. However, rather than produce a research paper, students in *Research Seminar* write a research proposal. The objective is not to produce an educated opinion on a topic, but rather to find a problem or topic that interests you, formulate it into a question, discover its background (what have experts and researchers discovered about this question), to create your own proposal for adding to (or filling in gaps in) the research and to design a method for answering your research question. Through *Research Seminar*, students learn what information is, where to find it, how to evaluate sources, libraries, research, etc., and how to design effective means to answer questions. At the end of the course, you will have a thoroughly investigated research proposal that may, or may not, be linked to your *Advanced Project*. Research Seminar is offered under a variety of general topics or without a topic ("theme-less"). It is also offered through SNL's SNL Online Program.

Externship

L-10: **Can reflect on the learning process and methods used in an experiential project.**
L-11: **To be written by faculty/student**
   Course: LL 302 *Externship* (pre-requisites: LL 250 *Foundations*, L-4 and L-5)
   The *Externship* is designed to give you an opportunity to focus on the particular dynamic of learning from direct experience in new situations. You can choose from two formats for completing the *Externship*: 1) an individualized project assessed by your academic committee or, 2) an SNL travel, community-based learning course, or other faculty designed Externship course. For all of these formats, you will be expected to:

- Identify and explain a personal learning goal
- Identify and select learning opportunities to support the goal
- Select and employ methods to achieve the desired learning goal
- Explain the interrelationship between one's own profile as a learner and new learning opportunities
- Explain the nature and outcomes of this particular learning experience

These specific criteria make clear that the emphasis in *Externship* is on thoughtful reflection about how your learning occurs. The learning environment you choose for the basis of your *Externship* will depend upon your own needs and preferences.

The central issues of the *Externship* are as follows: to push yourself to define and to expand your learning style, to learn about something with which you don't have much experience, and to familiarize yourself with your ability to successfully adapt to new learning.

In the *Externship* courses, you will meet as in other SNL classes, but the class focus is to direct you toward defined experiences. The experiential aspects are designed and arranged by the instructor. In the independent *Externship*, there are no scheduled meetings, but students arrange a system of communication with their Academic Committee. The *Externship* fulfills two competencies in the Life Long Learning area (L-10 & L-11). One competence is already written, and you will develop one with the

assistance of the instructor or the Academic Committee. Resources for the <u>independent</u> *Externship* can be found at http://snl.depaul.edu under Student Resources In addition, your Academic Committee may recommend resources to you. Completion of *Foundations*, and L4 and L5 competencies are pre-requisites to register for *Externship*.

Choosing a Format for *Externship*

The fundamental difference between the two options is the degree of structure they offer you.

- An individualized project gives you a great deal of control in shaping learning experiences to your particular needs and interests, with the Academic Committee assisting you in the specific design of the project. You manage the project, with periodic feedback from the Academic Committee at your request. When the project is complete, the Academic Committee assesses the work and awards a grade.

- SNL *Externship* courses provide you with more structure, including the expectation of class attendance. With this option, SNL faculty designs learning experiences appropriate for the objectives of Externship listed above and encourage you to tailor the activities and/or assignments of the course to reflect your individual learning goals. Faculty for the course will assess your work and award a Pass/Fail grade for *Externship*.

Since an important component of the *Externship* is understanding one's own profile as a learner, you should consider your learning style when choosing one of the two formats for *Externship*. You can decide whether you are best served by the flexibility of individualized projects or the structure of an SNL *Externship* course.

Externship Ideas and Examples

Student A developed criteria to analyze diets. She researched information on nutrition, assessed various theories in that field, and applied them to her own experience with fads, with medically approved diets, and with other types of weight loss schemes.

Student B learned how to restore furniture. She read about antiques and learned to recognize various period pieces. She identified which problem needed what sort of restoration. She purchased and restored several pieces.

Student C prepared an international menu for his dream restaurant, balancing practical considerations with marketing. He also prepared a Japanese meal and videotaped his efforts, and presented the video along with a step-by-step analysis of the required techniques.

Student D analyzed the needs and special considerations of the older workers. She tied her one-on-one interviews with workers to research done on the graying of the American workforce.

Student E completed several site visits to a Doctor's practice. She conducted a business analysis focusing on the new rules for billing Medicare and Medicaid. She identified several common business problems and recommended solutions.

Student F learned photography for his *Externship.* Through a park district course, he developed both technical and artistic skills. He learned how changing technology is influencing the photographic world. He researched the history of the art and produced a photo essay.

Student G drew on her years as a single mother, designing a training program for teenaged mothers and working to implement that program in a local health care facility.

Student H focused his *Externship* on tutoring. He investigated the local school system's use of tutors. He volunteered to work with students and researched learning styles and teaching techniques. He instituted a parent/tutor program for his children's school

Student I reviewed various mystery titles for her local library. She interviewed several librarians, bookstore owners, and literature teachers on assessing books for popular audiences. She chose several new authors, read and critiqued their works, and made recommendations based on her reading and research.

SECTION D: ACHIEVEMENT AND REVIEW: SUMMIT SEMINAR (L-12)

L-12: **Can articulate the personal and social value of lifelong learning.**

Course: LL 390 *Summit Seminar* (co-requisites: LL 302 *Externship* and FA 303 or FA 304 *Advanced Project*)
1. Reflects upon significant events during the educational program that contribute to a better understanding of one's self.
2. Identifies connections between one's education and opportunities to contribute to society.
3. Understands implications of previous learning for future learning.

Students demonstrate this competence at the conclusion of their program by explaining the nature of their undergraduate experiences. In the process, they reflect upon the impact of education on their individual identity and their lives in the context of communities and society. This examination of education in context will give students the opportunity to imagine or articulate their goals for future learning.

Summit Seminar is the culmination of your activities in the Lifelong Learning Area. You are advised to take this final requirement during your last quarter, just prior to graduating. You must either be registered for or have successfully completed LL 302 *Externship* and FA 303 or FA 304 *Advanced Project* to register for *Summit Seminar*. Your registration confirms that you have successfully completed all other Lifelong Learning competencies, including the last competencies you need to graduate. If you are unsure of your eligibility, discuss your readiness with your Academic Committee. This competence is required and carries two hours of tuition credit. Students must apply for graduation prior to registering for *Summit Seminar*.