

25 February 2019

TO: Members of the General Education Task Force (GETF)
FROM: Ole Question #2 Ad Hoc group (members listed in signature block)
RE: Final report of our work completed in January/February 2019

Dear GETF Members,

Our process in arriving at the poster to be presented for faculty discussion at the February 28 faculty meeting is presented in more detail in this report.

We began with an introductory discussion including but not limited to the following topics: reviewing our charge; reviewing some of the work done by the GE Task Force and full faculty so far; open-endedly brainstorming some big skills.

The open-ended brainstorming made us realize that we would need to proactively structure our skills conversations, because we tended to become so interested in the specific rationales for each skill idea as well as ways to develop these skills that we lost track of the brainstorming. Thus, we assigned ourselves a task for the next meeting: to come to the meeting having brainstormed and prepared note cards for as many skills as we could think of as important for Ole Q2.

At our next meeting, we arranged all of our combined note cards into various groupings, discussing each group as well as identifying missing or redundant note cards. After many iterations of grouping, we settled on the 20 groups shown in Appendix A, and assigned small teams of 2-3 members to write draft intended learning outcomes (ILOs) to capture each group. The original photos of the notecards are in our Team Drive sub-folder "Design Thinking Notecards."

These endeavors resulted in a draft list of ILOs (document "Skills/ILOs Draft From Notecards" in our Group 2 Team Drive AND included here as Appendix B with the inclusion of the 20 note card group photos from Appendix A). Each team member studied these drafts before our final meeting.

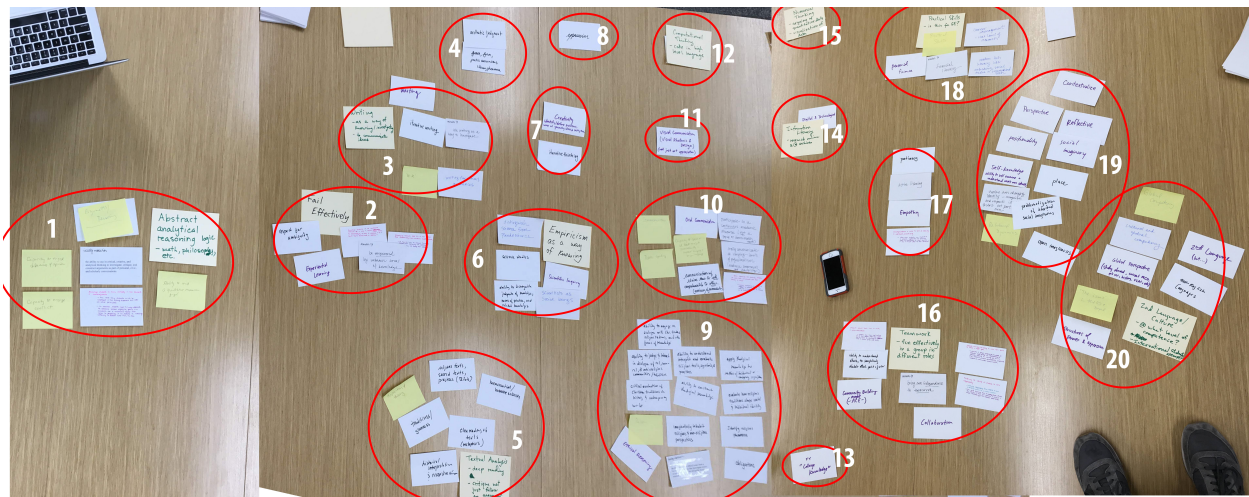
At our final meeting, we then separated each of the 20 draft ILOs, and again tried different groupings to identify missing areas and to cut redundancy. The six ILOs plus the cornerstone and capstone that made it onto the poster are presented in the six photos in our Team Drive sub-folder "Skills/ILOs – Combined Categories." In Appendix C we present the poster that was approved by the GETF for printing.

Respectfully,

Jay Demas
Thando Kunene
Lisa Moore
Peter Nelson

Jean Porterfield
Arjun Ramachandran ('20)
Gregory Walter

Appendix A: The 20 groupings of original notecards assigned to small groups of team members for drafting ILOs. Each of these 20 groups is shown again Appendix B alongside the draft ILOs written for them.

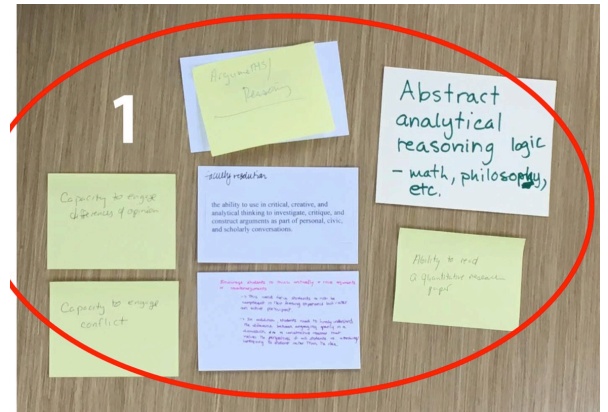


Appendix B: The draft ILOs written by small groups corresponding to each of the 20 note card groups.

Thando/Peter/Jean

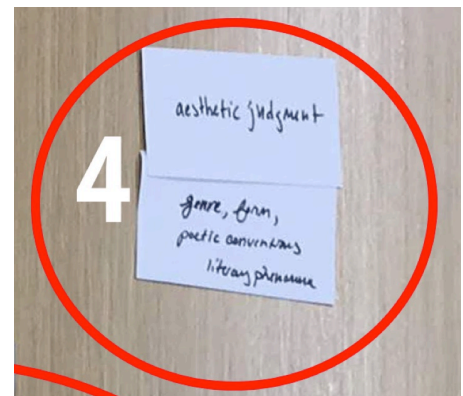
#1

The ability to use critical, creative, and analytical thinking to investigate, critique, and construct arguments as part of personal, civic, and scholarly conversations.



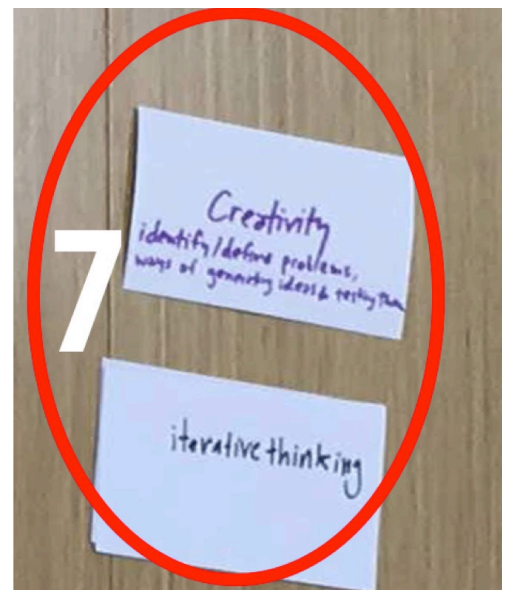
#4

The ability to assess and contextualize various forms of cultural production, such as literary, historical, musical, visual, scientific artifacts and discovery.



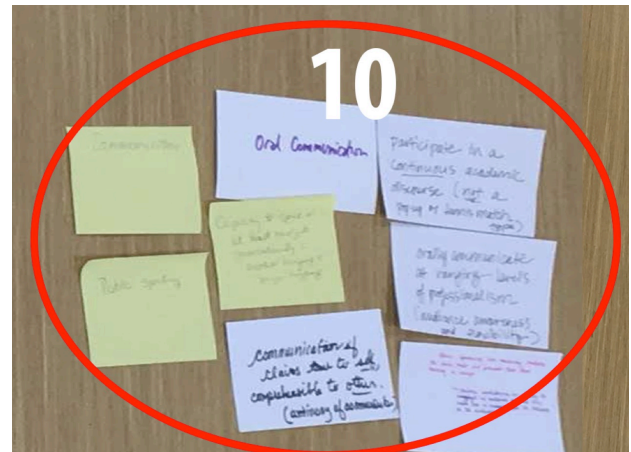
#7

Expression - either ditch it or include in visual, oral, or written communication



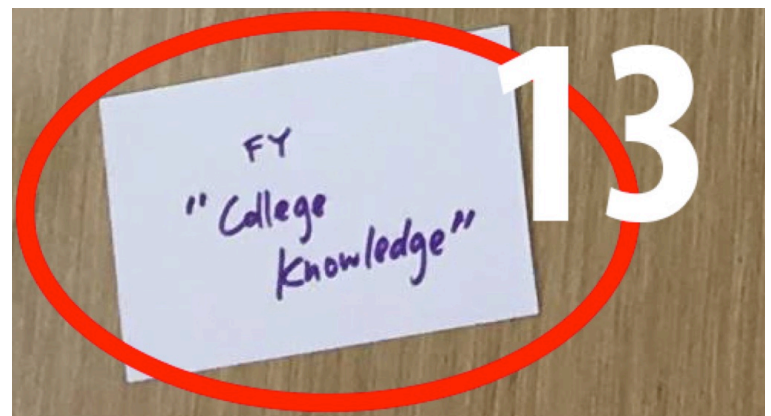
#10

Oral communication - communicate, listen, and respond appropriately and effectively in a wide variety of contexts and a wide range of audiences, in professional, academic, civic, and interpersonal settings.



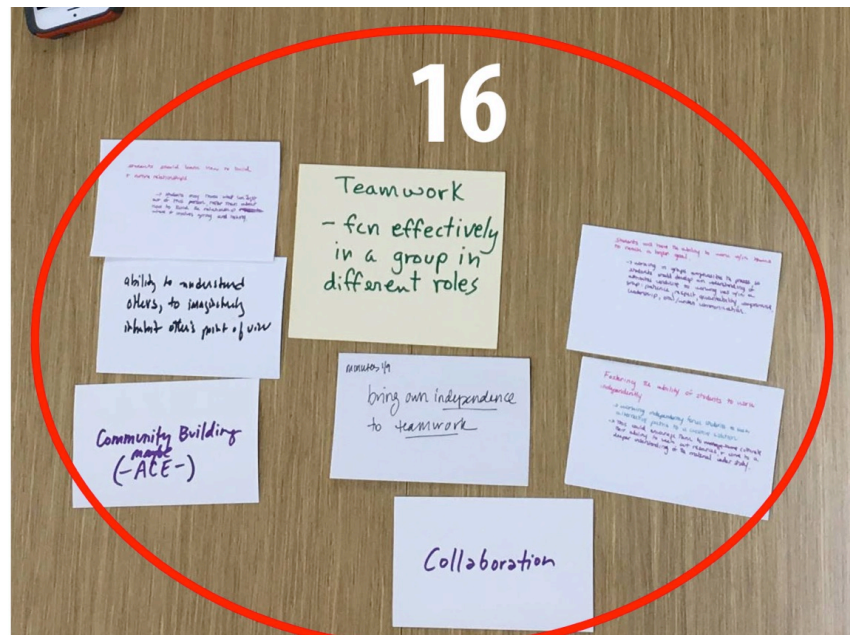
#13

Students should have the ability to identify and navigate the systems, resources, expectations, and culture of a small liberal arts college with the goal of developing increased self-efficacy.



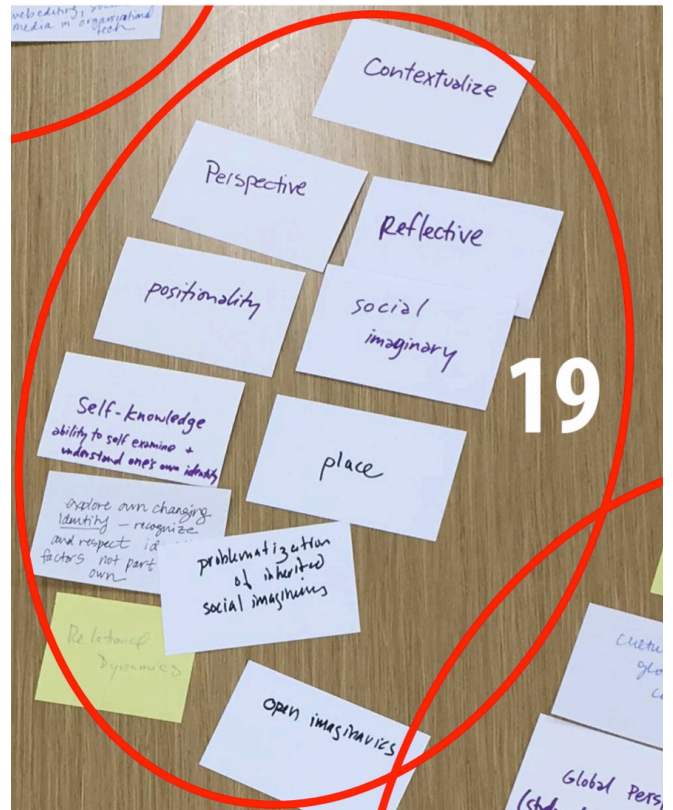
#16

Develop necessary skills to work in collaborative environments and the ability to understand divergent perspectives, build consensus, and be attentive (sensitive?) to the best interests of the group.



#19

Self-knowledge regarding one's identity and positionality and how it is informed by a unique historical, political, and cultural context and how those factors, in turn, inform the identities of others.

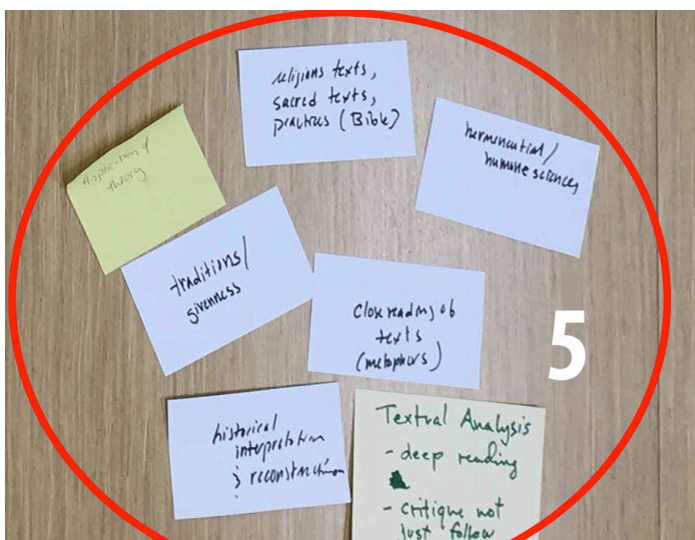
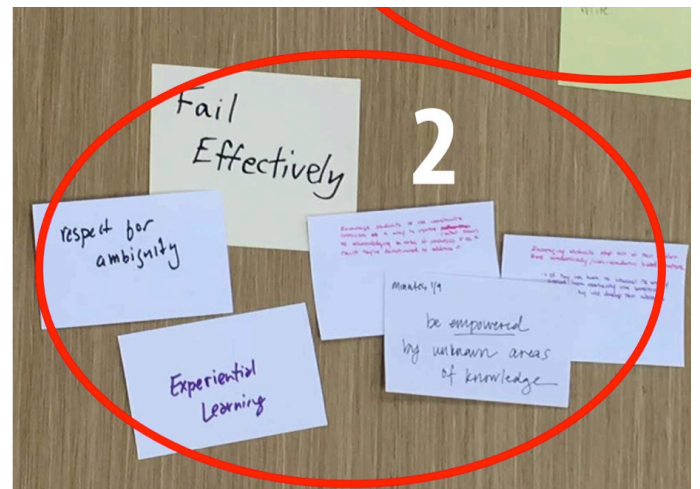


Lisa & Jay (2, 5, 8, 11, 14, 19, and 20)

#2

Students will engage in experiential learning opportunities that facilitate growth through application of ideas learned in the classroom.

Students will integrate experiential learning opportunities into their classroom analysis of theories and ideas.

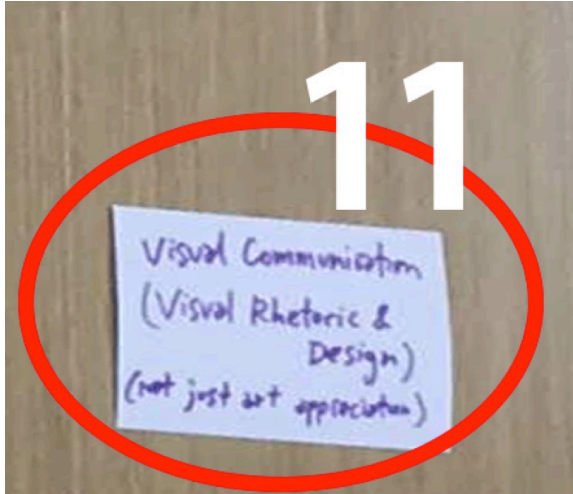
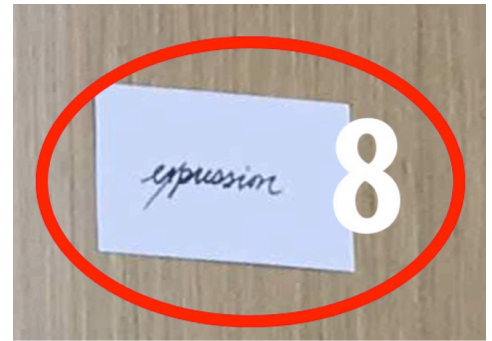


#5

Students will demonstrate an ability to closely read, analyze, and interpret text.

#8

Iterative thinking, design thinking, idea generation, creativity,....

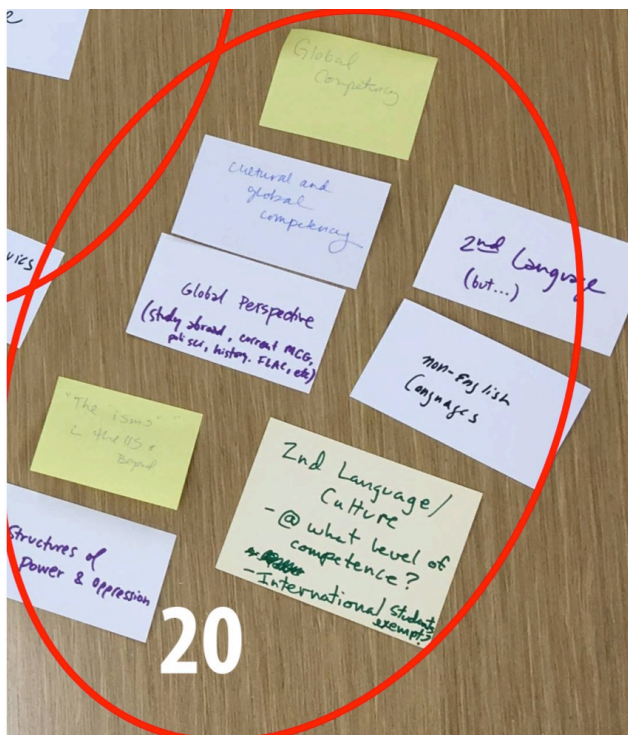
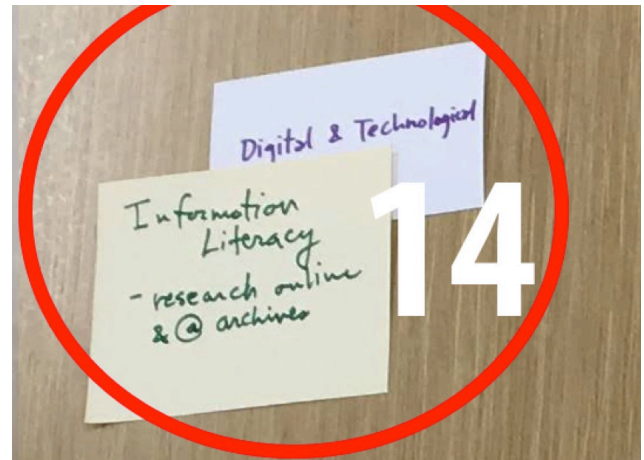


#11

Students will demonstrate the ability to encode and interpret information graphically in addition to lexically and orally.

#14

Students will acquire a fluency in digital research, demonstrating the ability to locate resources and evaluate their quality, and verifying the accuracy of the information.



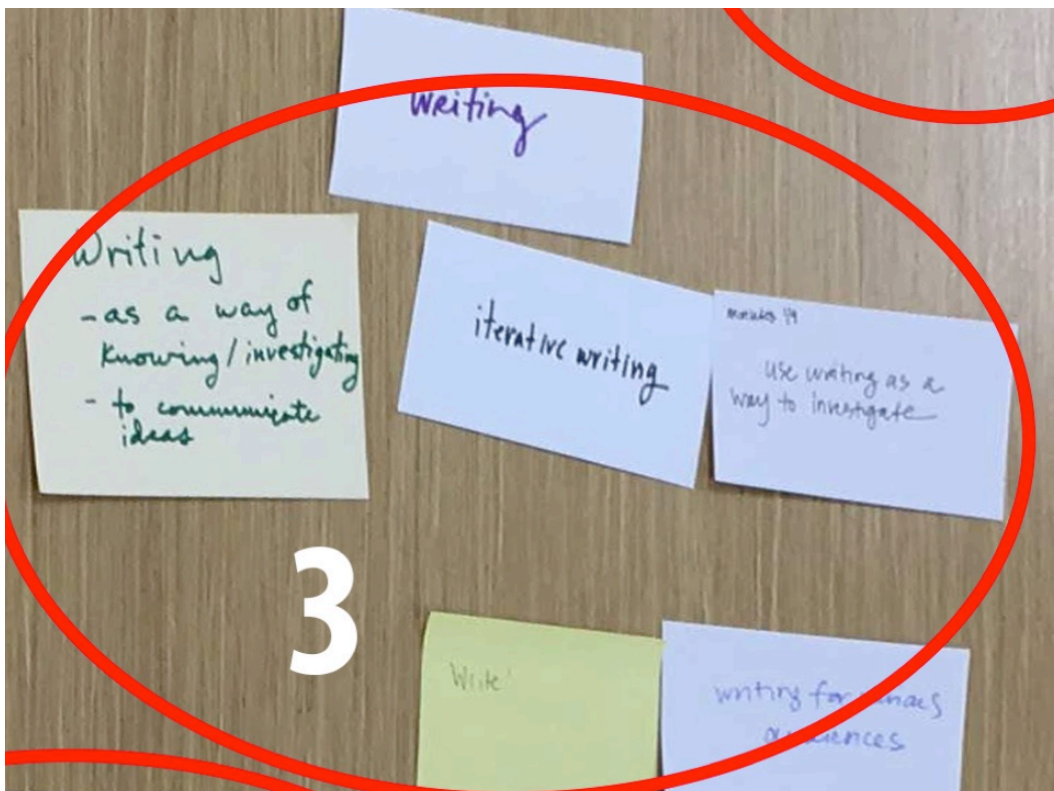
#20

Questions: how should this ILO differ for international students? Language acquisition. the ability to locate resources and evaluate their quality, and verifying the accuracy of the information.

Arjun/Greg

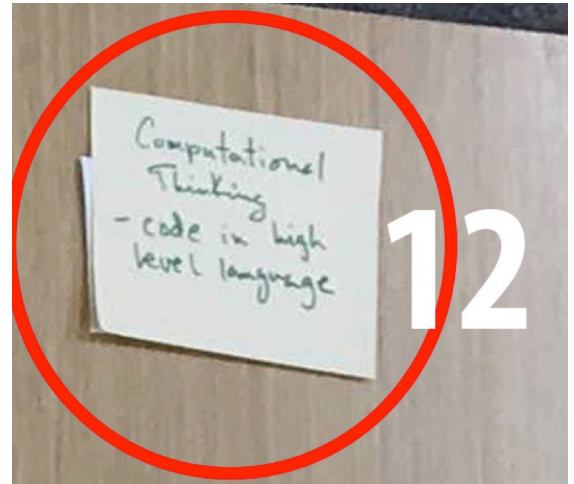
#3 Writing to communicate ideas effectively

- a. Planning writing project
 - i. Identifying the overarching question, theme, subject and finding appropriate sources. (Research problem)
 - ii. Gathering resources useful for planning (research, locating and evaluating sources, and other preparatory work)
- b. Identify style, form, and purpose
 - i. Consider relationship of author's idiom to audience idiom (matters of colloquial language and formal languages)
 - ii. Study models of kinds of writing appropriate to various purposes (discipline, journalism, argument, report, etc)
 1. Being able to identify and apply knowledge/understanding of various study models of kinds of writing to a project in order to convey relevant message.
- c. Consider matters suitable to audience
- d. Use reference systems, sources, evidence, quotation, paraphrase as appropriate
- e. Revision of drafts, review of drafts, peer and instructor review
- f. Ability to finalize draft



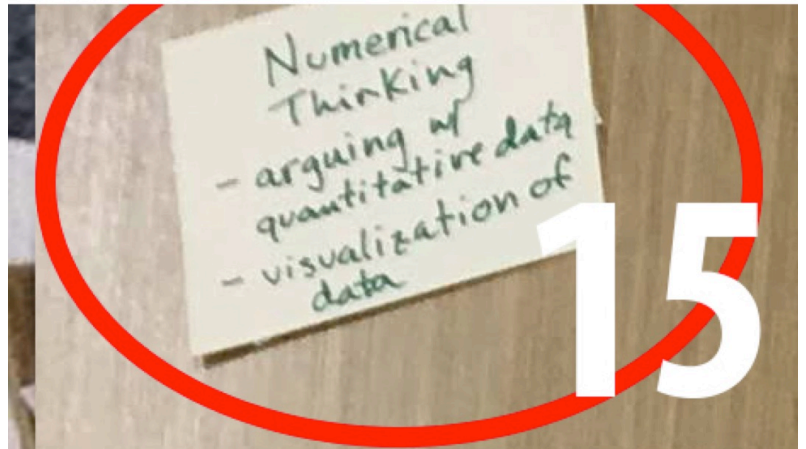
#12 Computational Thinking

- a. Writing code in a variety of languages pertinent to addressing a multi-stepped problem.
- b. Algorithmic analysis, construction, and evaluation.
- c. Communicate technical language accessible for a broader audience.



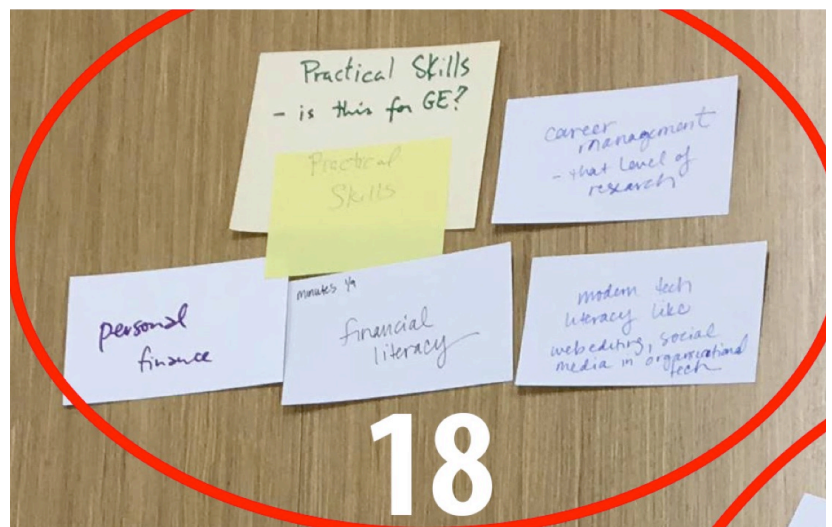
#15 Numerical thinking

- a. Ability to interpret and use statistical inquiry.
- b. Compute, evaluate, and employ numerical reasoning for discipline specific problems.

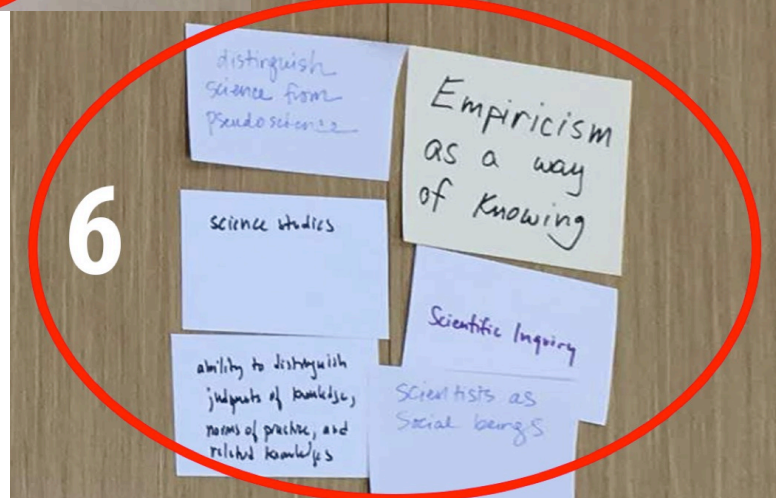
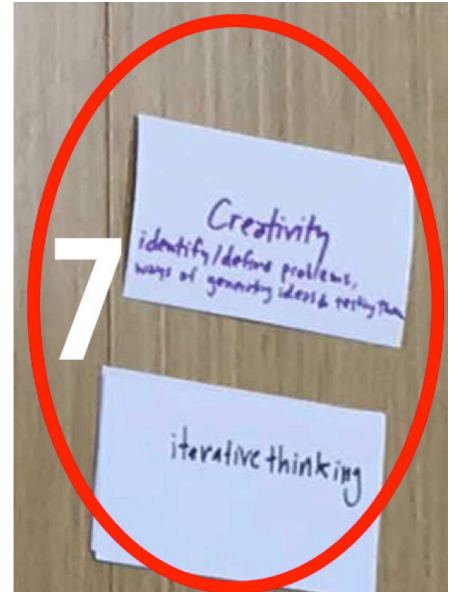
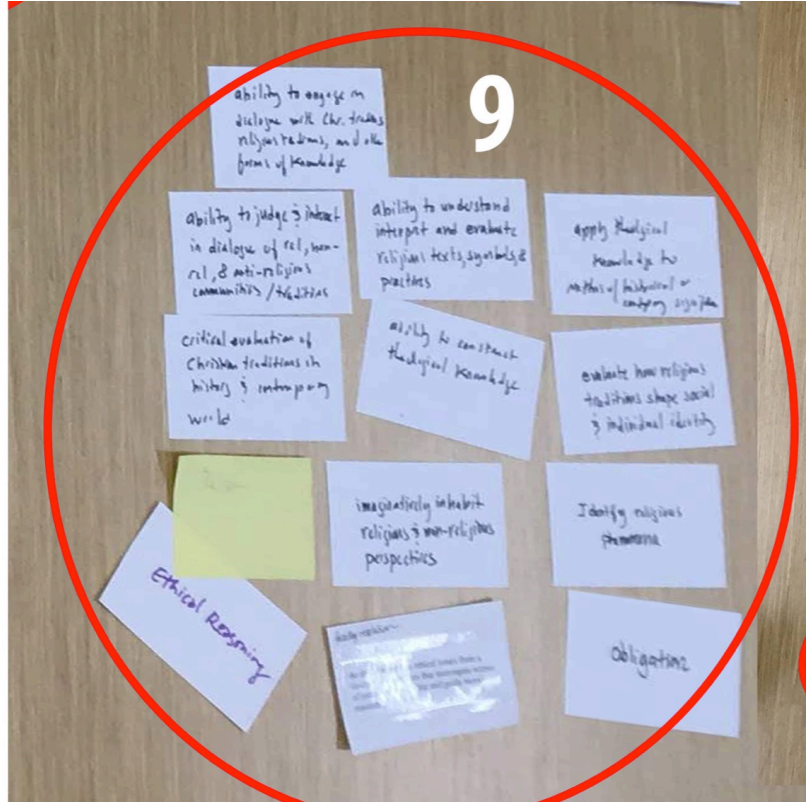


#18 Practical skills

- a. Financial literacy
- b. Career management
- c. Professionalism
- d. The ability to collaborate in larger groups
- e. Oral and written communication
- f. Digital literacy
- g. Resourcefulness



#s 6, 7, and 9 Religion



Religious life presents enduring, linked, and open questions that require the pursuit of skills both critical understanding of religion and theological inquiry. These requirements continue St Olaf College's commitment to the study of religion but expands the goals of its GE to reflect the needs of a changing world. The following reflects consideration of student survey and focus groups, research on pedagogy and religion, and attention to innovations in undergraduate education in religion and theology.

Students are increasingly unfamiliar with religious life and so a first course on the Bible ought to be replaced with a first course that introduces religious life with focus on a particular religious community or tradition. Students also need to be able to engage in theological dialogue in an increasingly plural world that puts Islamic, Hindu, Buddhist, Jewish theology, and non-religious modes of inquiry on par with Christian theology. Thus, students ought to be able to take a variety of courses widely taught that satisfy these two distinct constellations of skills.

I. Critical Understanding of Religion constellation

1. Ability to identify religious phenomena
2. Ability to evaluate how religions influence human social and individual identity
3. Ability to imaginatively inhabit religious and non-religious perspectives
4. Ability to understand, interpret, and evaluate religious texts, symbols, and actions
5. Ability to judge the interaction and dialogue of the religious and the non-religious

Students need skills to live in a world where many religions and secularities intersect in manifold ways to influence nearly all dimensions of human life. These skills require students to critically interpret and understand religious life and its existence in a pluralist and secular world.

Students need to be able to imaginatively inhabit and consider how religious practices and communities shape knowledge of the world through a variety of humanist and social scientific skills: the study of religious writings, scripture, ritual, practices, and history. In courses related to this set of skills, students gain introductory knowledge to a religious tradition or religious traditions in comparison. Students need to explore ongoing questions whether religious life is a manifestation of non-religious dimensions of life.

In a college "nourished by Lutheran tradition" its students and community members should take seriously religious and secular diversity and their interaction. Students are able to take a course in a particular religious tradition as offered by faculty, of which the majority will be in Christianities, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Judaism given current staffing.

The study of the Bible in the BTS constellation has done much to increase religious fluency of students but at the cost of a holistic and nimble approach to religious life and its many practices and centers. Students would be able to take a course on Buddhism, focused on its practices or on its teachings in relationship to contemporary cognitive science. Students could continue to take a course in Bible but to do so nested in a series of other questions than straightforward biblical literacy, questions such as what is the meaning of life, what to do about religious violence, or how do I treat the stranger? Such an arrangement of the study of religion would also lend itself to incorporation into various learning communities, programs, or interdisciplinary

pursuits. This focus will also serve the needs of a diverse student body by increasing agency in what religious traditions students aim to study.

This proposal builds on previous GE in tying the first course to other religious traditions along with courses in Christianity. This departs from previous practice but not from fidelity to the College's mission. Lutheran tradition honors religious and secular life by regarding questions of existence, meaning, and value with seriousness and treats how these questions have been considered through religious practices, wisdom, and community as worthy partners to other human pursuits. St. Olaf College, compared to other Lutheran colleges, was not founded to prepare students to be clergy and so the ways it has required its students to study religion has historically responded to the needs of life in the world, not to the needs of religious communities.

II. Theology Constellation

1. Ability to construct theological knowledge
2. Ability to engage in theological dialogue with or from Christianities with other religious traditions and non-religious or with other forms of inquiry.
3. Ability to apply theological knowledge and skills to issues of historical, contemporary, or personal significance.

Students need skills to understand, criticize, and imaginatively inhabit how religious communities and people make their claims, arguments, and formulate understandings of their world in conversation with non-religious and other religious traditions. Religions traditions have extensive, deep, and highly idiomatic forms of reasoning that can generally be called theology. Theological reasoning appears in secular guise, non-religious contexts, and throughout the pluralist world. A college “nourished in Lutheran tradition” takes seriously not just the existence of religious communities and traditions but also their intellectual work as a meeting ground of faith, reason, and practice.

This GE is about skills in theological dialogue. This set of skills focuses the goal of theological fluency on the engagement, cooperation, conflict, and solidarity occurring in the world. Thus, it has students considering how Christianity and other religions, the secular, or non-religious phenomena and inquiry interact as claims and arguments. A course in theological dialogue does not privilege Christian theology or its partner. This would give equal footing to students who do not participate in a religious community and those who do, as well as provide choice to students who want to explore theology as articulated in Islam, Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism, and other religious traditions as staffing allows.

The effect of these two constellations, combined with other work, would prepare students in ways that far exceed what other undergraduate programs offer. Mostly, other colleges do nothing to support students in navigating a world with religion, not even to say its manifold religious pluralisms and intersecting secular spheres. Those that do so often privilege Christianity over other traditions. Often, a single course titled “world religions” is on offer that study has shown does little to increase skill in religious literacy. St Olaf has an opportunity in these two sets of GE to continue its excellence in offering students skills in navigating religion but to do so in a way more responsive to the contemporary world.

GE Ad Hoc Group 2

Jay Demas, Thando Kunene, Lisa Moore, Peter Nelson, Jean Porterfield, Arjun Ramachandran ('20), Gregory Walter

Q2. What skills do I need to live a meaningful and purposeful life in community?

CORNERSTONE: First year students should be guided in developing the ability to identify and navigate the systems, resources, expectations, and culture of a small liberal arts college with the goal of developing increased self-efficacy.

ILO 1. Literacy: Students will demonstrate the ability to assess, interpret, and contextualize various forms of cultural production including but not limited to scientific, literary, historical, musical, visual, or political artifacts and discoveries.

ILO 2. Communication: Students will demonstrate the ability to communicate, (through the production of written, oral, visual, and digital media), listen, and respond appropriately to a wide range of audiences in professional, academic, civic, and interpersonal settings.

- oral communication
- written communication
- visual communication
- digital communication

ILO 3. Critical Thinking and Problem Solving: students will demonstrate proficiency at identifying and assessing questions, gathering evidence, formulating logical arguments, and employing metacognitive reflection. Students will develop these core skills within the context of more than one discipline. One disciplinary approach must address problem solving or argumentation using quantitative or symbolic techniques such as

- statistical reasoning
- computational thinking
- abstract modeling
- formal logic

ILO 4. Social Imaginary: Students will achieve self-knowledge about identity and positionality and its multi-faceted context including understanding of social imaginaries in the following (and other) areas:

- additional (?) language acquisition
- ethical reasoning
- how religion influences individual and social identities
- theological dialog among religious traditions and the non-religious in a pluralist society
- historical, political, and cultural contexts

ILO 5. Collaboration: Students will develop necessary skills to work in collaborative environments including the ability to understand divergent perspectives and build consensus while contributing their own independent perspective.

ILO 6. Experiential Learning: Students will integrate academic and experiential learning by applying classroom theories and ideas in a practical setting and draw upon experiential learning to advance their understanding in an academic setting.

- ACE courses
- directed undergraduate research
- internships
- practicums

CAPSTONE: Graduating students will have synthesized and articulated their experiential and curricular learning so as to apply it to the management of their professional and vocational life.