

Competencies & Student Activities

Integrating competencies into our work is about using a unifying framework to align what we know is already happening across the University of Iowa, it's not about creating new programs and services. This document outlines guidelines for integrating competencies into student activities.

Map it: During the planning of an activity or event, consider what you would like students to accomplish. Using Homecoming as an example see how competencies fit in the mission: Homecoming at Iowa began in 1912 and is one of the most longstanding traditions at the University of Iowa. This celebration of the University and its history truly brings people together and increases the Hawkeye spirit among all people.

Name it: Once you know what students will gain as a result of being involved, you will need to intentionally name those skills. Consider the following questions as you are preparing to meet with students: What should they be learning? What opportunities could be provided to help students understand what they are learning? It is as easy as saying, "As a part of your experience in this activity, I expect you to learn problem solving skills, listening skills, and group development."

Focus on integrative learning: Students will have social, academic, and professional opportunities to improve their competence across many domains. When a student is able to make connections between their efforts in and out of the classroom, they are more likely to value the effort they make.

- What opportunities could be provided to help students make connections across contexts?
- How can the student connect the knowledge with the skill?

Effective reflection is critical: Asking students questions during one-on-one conversations, when, during trainings, in after event evaluations, etc. about what they are learning and how it connects to their other experiences at Iowa, is all it takes to get connections firing about how learning might be used across contexts.

- What opportunities could be provided to help students reflect on their learning?
- What are some potential reflection questions, activities, etc.?

You could facilitate a focus group with students before Homecoming and then after Homecoming to see if the competencies were reached. You could create and implement a quick survey or reflection opportunity following each Homecoming event; this will allow both attendees and student leaders to see the growth or areas of opportunity.