

Lake Superior State University

GUIDELINES FOR UNIVERSITY-WIDE DEFINITION OF COURSE LEVELS

Preliminary Remarks:

This document should help clarify for both faculty and students the general guidelines for course structure, organization and degree of difficulty or sophistication at each of the 100, 200, 300 and 400 levels. The 100-, 200-, 300- and 400-level course numbers should have a university-wide meaning which can be defined in general terms. There is a basic distinction in the numbering system used by highly structured "building block" disciplines (where a "102" follows and presupposes a "101" or a "250" is more advanced than a "210") and almost totally unstructured ones (in which course numbers within a level are not indicative of any particular sequence), which is within the jurisdiction of each department. The assumptions used in the development of the levels reflect higher education's use of both Webb's Depth of Knowledge and Bloom's Taxonomy. Absolute uniformity of standards is impossible to achieve and not necessarily desirable. We therefore propose the following general criteria for course levels which we believe can satisfy the needs of the various academic departments of the university. Since the course level criteria are general, specific course pre-requisites, co-requisites, etc., if any, should be clearly stated under each course description.

The differentiation between lower and upper division Courses shall be as follows:

Lower-division courses comprise all 100-level courses and all 200-level courses.

Upper-division courses comprise all 300- and 400-level courses.

000-level course designation

Pre-college courses

100-level course designation

Courses with pre-college level prerequisites, such as survey courses, or courses defining basic concepts or presenting the terminology of a discipline.

- Minimum Webb Depth of Knowledge Level 1: Recall and Reproduction of Information
- Students will demonstrate the cognitive recall and comprehension of foundational knowledge in the respective area of study.

200-level course designation

Courses of intermediate college-level difficulty; courses with 100-level course(s) as prerequisite(s); or survey courses devoted to particular areas or fields within a discipline.

- Minimum Webb Depth of Knowledge Level 2: Basic Reasoning (Skills & Concepts)
- Students will be expected to apply foundational knowledge of a respective area of study, comprehending a higher level of complexity of the specific area of study.
- Lower level pre-requisite course(s) and/or appropriate class standing are expected.

300-level course designation

Courses of advanced college-level difficulty taken by majors and upper division students; these are often considered to be courses in the Major, offered for students clearly interested and qualified in a subject.

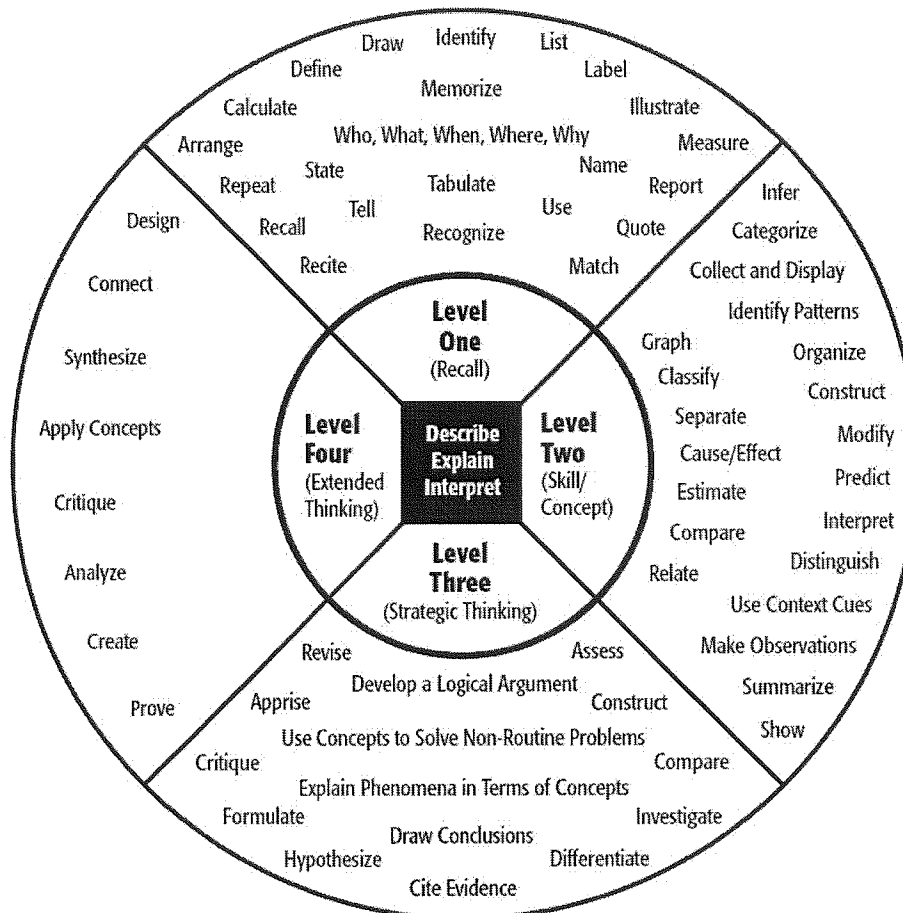
- Minimum Webb Depth of Knowledge Level 3: Strategic Thinking/Complex Reasoning
- Students will be expected to apply and analyze complex concepts of a specific area of study, which may or may not require inclusion of knowledge from other areas of study.
- Lower level pre-requisite course(s) and/or appropriate class standing are expected.

400-level course designation

Advanced upper-division courses; and/or seminars, tutorials and honor courses for majors and upper-division students.

- Webb Depth of Knowledge Level 4: Extended Thinking/Reasoning
- Students will be expected to synthesize and evaluate complex concepts in relation to a specific area of study and the liberal arts.
- Lower level pre-requisite course(s) and/or appropriate class standing are expected.

Depth of Knowledge (DOK) Levels



Level One Activities	Level Two Activities	Level Three Activities	Level Four Activities
Recall elements and details of story structure, such as sequence of events, character, plot and setting.	Identify and summarize the major events in a narrative.	Support ideas with details and examples.	Conduct a project that requires specifying a problem, designing and conducting an experiment, analyzing its data, and reporting results/ solutions.
Conduct basic mathematical calculations.	Use context cues to identify the meaning of unfamiliar words.	Use voice appropriate to the purpose and audience.	Apply mathematical model to illuminate a problem or situation.
Label locations on a map.	Solve routine multiple-step problems.	Identify research questions and design investigations for a scientific problem.	Analyze and synthesize information from multiple sources.
Represent in words or diagrams a scientific concept or relationship.	Describe the cause/effect of a particular event.	Develop a scientific model for a complex situation.	Describe and illustrate how common themes are found across texts from different cultures.
Perform routine procedures like measuring length or using punctuation marks correctly.	Identify patterns in events or behavior.	Determine the author's purpose and describe how it affects the interpretation of a reading selection.	Design a mathematical model to inform and solve a practical or abstract situation.
Describe the features of a place or people.	Formulate a routine problem given data and conditions.	Apply a concept in other contexts.	
	Organize, represent and interpret data.		

Webb, Norman L. and others. "Web Alignment Tool" 24 July 2005. Wisconsin Center of Educational Research, University of Wisconsin-Madison. 2 Feb. 2006. <<http://www.wcer.wisc.edu/WAT/index.aspx>>