

# General Education Reflection

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Throughout my career at Iowa State University I have grown as a person and an engineer. Part of this growth can be attributed to my General Education classes, providing me with differing perspectives I have found invaluable when approaching problems. These classes round me out as a person, broadening my skillsets so that I become a more effective engineer.

When creating software, it is generally helpful to understand the way people think. Psychology 101 and Speech Communication 212 were invaluable in this way, teaching me more about the human mind and allowing for more effective user interface designs. UIs must be designed with ease of use in mind, and understanding the most likely actions for a user to take allows the design to be that much more effective. In the case of SpCom 212, I better understand what people don't want to do, and can change my designs accordingly.

As a civilian, I have always wondered how the US military operates. A chance to explore this curiosity came with AFAS 442, a US Air Force preparation course for cadets that was offered to normal students. It provided a window into the core of the Air Force, showing how much preparation is required for certain missions, and the cooperation required to keep everything running smoothly. While not the full military experience, militaristic conventions juxtaposed with typical coursework clearly showed the differences between civilian and military culture.

With knowledge on how humans and computers think, I would still be missing an understanding of how a large group of humans think - particularly with money. This is where Economy 101 comes in. Showing how groups of people trade and barter revealed patterns that are certain to appear again in the future. This not only helps when directly handling money but helps in more complicated situations to predict a user's choices when comparing risk vs reward.

In all, General Education Classes have been a valuable part of my college career. Classes like Psych 101 and SpCom 212 served to better understand human behavior and dislikes, allowing for more efficient UI design. AFAS 442 served to quench my curiosity about the US military. Econ 101 served to better my understanding of the world at large and how people deal with money. These classes have opened new avenues for problem solving and have allowed a deeper understanding of users, improving my skills as an engineer.