

General Education Reflection

My primary focus while studying here at Iowa State was to learn about cyber security and how to solve the problems facing security in our world. I thought that all of that type of learning would occur in my core classes that were required for my degree, and I initially thought that my general education classes would have a much smaller impact on my learning than they ended up being. By taking these classes I learned different ways to think about solving problems and am now better able to view problems from alternate perspectives.

I started my journey with general elective classes with Introduction to Psychology (PSYCH 101) when I wanted to get a start into the subject because of my interest in understanding how we think. This class was when I first began to realize the importance of mixing these general elective classes into my schedule. The best methods to succeed in this class were different from most of the other engineering classes I had been taking thus far. The problems that had to be solved in this type of class were less about solving a material problem where the solution can be seen on paper, but instead the answer was dealing more with understanding how people think. This glimpse into a different type of problem solving also led me to take Brain and Behavior (PSYCH 310) in order to gain a deeper understanding of how we think and what we can do to improve our thinking for different situations. I learned how to use the science behind our mind in order to think about problem solving in different ways like viewing different perspectives and others' ideas in order to find solutions.

Following the same line of psychology, which is a topic I have also had an interest in, I also took the class Sport Psychology (KIN 365). While a large portion of the class was focused on sport aspects of psychology and how they can be handled, several of the topics could be applied to areas that I will have more focus in as I move forth in engineering. Subjects like stress management and team psychology were two in particular that I will use further in my career. Not only did we learn about the causes and how to prevent them, but also ways to deal with problems.

The last general elective that I want to focus on is American Food and Culture (FS HN 220). This class was one where I learned about how problems were solved regarding food and ways they were solved. By attending lectures I got insight into old problems that existed regarding the lack of food and the thought processes that people went through to solve these

problems and create new efficient foods. Being able to recognize the different perspectives these problem solvers had to use gave me insight into how I can think in different ways in order to solve problems.

The main pieces that I learned from taking these general education electives is that they are more important than I initially thought and how to think in different ways than just the typical engineering view. Looking into how other people view a problem and envisioning how the solution could impact other people was a skill I gained from taking several psychology classes. Being able to view all types of different peoples perspectives when approaching a problem will be an asset that I use all throughout my engineering journey.