

Milestone Model on Client-Centered Problem-Solving and Good Judgment¹

Sub-competencies of Client-Centered Problem-Solving/Good Judgment	Novice Learner Level 1	Intermediate Learner Level 2	Competent Learner Level 3	Exceptional Learner Level 4
1. Seeks Deep Understanding of Client's Context (Business), Values, and Preferences	Rarely seeks deep understanding of client's context (business), values and preferences Rarely demonstrates active listening with client	Sometimes seeks deep understanding of client's context (business), values, and preferences Sometimes demonstrates active listening with client	Often seeks deep understanding of client's context (business), values, and preferences Often demonstrates active listening with client	Consistently seeks deep understanding of client's context (business), values, and preferences Consistently demonstrates active listening with client
2. Partnering with the Client, Defines Problem	Rarely demonstrates an ability to partner with the client to construct a complete problem statement with the relevant contextual factors.	Sometimes demonstrates the ability to partner with the client to construct a complete problem statement with relevant contextual factors.	Often demonstrates the ability to partner with the client to construct a complete problem statement with relevant contextual factors.	Consistently demonstrates the ability to partner with the client to construct a complete problem statement with all relevant contextual factors.
3. Partnering with the Client, Identifies Strategies and Proposes Solutions	Rarely identifies a strategy and proposes a clear solution for solving the problem.	Sometimes identifies a strategy and proposes a solution that is "off the shelf" rather than individually designed to address the specific contextual factors of the problem.	Often identifies multiple strategies and proposes one or more solutions that indicate comprehension of the problem. Solutions are sensitive to contextual factors.	Consistently identifies multiple strategies and proposes one or more solutions/hypotheses that indicate a deep comprehension of the problem. Solutions are sensitive to contextual factors.
4. Partnering with the Client, Helps Client Evaluate Potential Solutions	Rarely goes beyond superficial evaluation of solutions (for example, contains cursory, surface level explanation) in terms of the history of the problem, logic/reasoning, feasibility of solution, and impacts of solution.	Sometimes goes beyond superficial evaluation of solutions but evaluation is brief (for example, explanation lacks depth) in terms of the history of the problem, logic/reasoning, feasibility of solution, and impacts of solution.	Often, evaluation of solutions is adequate (for example, contains thorough explanation) in terms of the history of the problem, logic/reasoning, feasibility of solution, and impacts of solution.	Consistently, evaluation of solutions is deep and elegant (for example, contains thorough and insightful explanation) and is deep and thorough in terms of the history of problem, logic/reasoning, feasibility of solution, and impacts of solution.
5. Assists Client in Implementing Solutions	Rarely implements the client's solution in a manner that directly addresses the problem statement.	Sometimes implements the client's solution in a manner that directly addresses the problem statement.	Often implements the client's solution in a manner that directly addresses the problem statement.	Consistently implements the client's solution in a manner that directly addresses the problem statement.

Many legal educators define legal analysis and reasoning and problem solving to include some version of the IRAC formulation familiar to law students -- Issue correctly identified from facts, Rule correctly identified and explained, Application providing a well-reasoned discussion

¹ Neil Hamilton created this model.

relating the facts to the rules, and Conclusion explained logically convincingly.² A later-stage IRAC skill is foundational for legal analysis and reasoning and problem-solving but Goal 3's "client-centered problem-solving and good judgment" involve additional skills beyond IRAC. Those competencies include deeply understanding the client's context (and where applicable, business), values, and preferences. Client-centered problem solving and good judgment also involve career-long habits of: (1) trying to understand legal issues in broader contexts; and (2) seeking challenging professional experiences and reflecting on them to continually improve.³

This Milestone Model on client-centered problem solving and good judgment that is adapted from the American Association of Colleges and Universities Problem-Solving Value Rubric.⁴ Building on a version of legal analysis and reasoning like IRAC, client-centered problem solving and good judgment involve a process of partnering with the client to define the problem, identify strategies, propose solutions, evaluate the potential solutions, and assist in implementing the solutions.

² See Kelley Burton, *Using a Legal Reasoning Grid and Criterion-Referenced Assessment Rubric on IRAC (Issue, Rule, Application, and Conclusion)*, 10 J. LEARNING DESIGN (No. 2 2017) (providing a stage development model on IRAC) <https://www.jld.edu.au/article/view/229/283.html>

³ See PATRICK LONGAN, DAISY FLOYD & TIMOTHY FLOYD, *THE FORMATION OF PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY* 106-11 (2020).

⁴ This Milestone is an adaptation of the AAC&U's Problem-Solving Value Rubric available at <https://www.aacu.org/value/rubrics/problem-solving>

The VALUE rubrics were developed by teams of faculty experts representing colleges and universities across the United States through a process that examined many existing campus rubrics and related documents for each learning outcome and incorporated additional feedback from faculty. The rubrics articulate fundamental criteria for each learning outcome, with performance descriptors demonstrating progressively more sophisticated levels of attainment.