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General Education and the Quality of Human Living

THOMAS J. MUSIAL

A sage teacher of mine, Willis Nutting, now a very young man in his mid-seventies, spent a good deal of his long academic career helping others to refocus their myopic views on education and to avoid excessive operational ruts in their learning. The best of his thought on liberal learning appears in his most recent book, *The Free City*. An enterprising publisher labeled the work on its dust jacket as “a radical proposal for overhauling the machinery of liberal education.” In one way the book is that, in that it calls the reader’s attention to how much superfluous machinery has worked its way into our systems of formal education. But more importantly, because principles should guide forms of practical implementation, the virtue of the book is the way it provides a fresh perspective on the fundamental objectives of general education.

Because Willis Nutting is now also my good friend and neighbor, I have had the continuing good fortune of watching him implement the precepts of his book. He has never allowed me to forget that a man is a person before he is a civic leader or an expert, and that it is therefore more sensible for educators to give priority of concern to the man himself, so that if possible he may become wise and understanding. He has convinced me that it is by no means certain that the kind of training necessary to make a man a specialist will also fully develop his intellect—and that it is even likely that such training so narrows his interests and his ability to think in many directions that he becomes less wise than he was before he began his training. He has
made me aware of how and why the almost exclusively theoretical education that a person gets in college positively *unfits* him for leading men and "educates him away" from his fellows so that he can no longer communicate with them. Long before it was so apparent that the methods and ideals developed in the nineteenth century for the training of expert scholars (the model of our graduate schools) were not liberalizing experiences, Willis Nutting was quietly proclaiming that the specialist scholar is not a paradigm of the highest or best example of the man whose intellect is fully and rightly developed. In this frame of reference, with fundamental reservations about much of what our so-called "liberal arts" colleges are doing, he developed alternatives, and *The Free City* is a model of a great teacher's serious examination of basic educational objectives and how to implement them.

I am especially sensitive to Dr. Nutting's basic tenets because of the way people today are overwhelmed by the diversity of our cultural pluralism and the difficulties of responding creatively and knowledgeably to a complicated world and a way of life that are changing with unprecedented rapidity. Their education should help them come to terms with these difficulties, but in the main, it does not. Instead, educators avoid the problem by passing on the responsibility for important educational decisions to those who are doing the learning, whether or not they are prepared for it. Or, they proclaim that such educational objectives are hopelessly ideal or ambitious and that the best way to use the opportunities of formal learning is to become a competent professional cog in the societal machinery. Still others, the guardians of cultural heritage, insist that formal education ought to consist of acquiring some knowledge of yesteryear which is "the knowledge most worth having" and which will serve as a reliable guide through the future.

There is, of course, truth in each of those positions. There are matters about one's education that should be decided only by the one who is doing the learning. There is a virtue in professional competence, and it is good that society rewards such virtue. There is much of exceptional greatness to be learned from those who came before us, and only a fool would insist that every person ought to do all his learning by himself from scratch. But none of the educational programs which emphasize these tenets, or any combination of them, responds sufficiently to the more fundamental dimensions of the current problems which threaten the basic freedom, identity, and dignity of man.

Contemporary society has produced vast, extremely complicated, technical, and interconnected institutional forms that now virtually determine and control the human needs they were originally designed to serve. A faceless economic machinery with standardized, interchangeable parts has made efficiency and conformity supreme virtues at the great cost of what is personal, creative, and unique in its mem-

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bers. Technicians of human behavior are claiming more and more control over the way every man, woman, and child spend their lives. Unfortunately, our systems of formal education, themselves guided by these same mechanics, reinforce the very problems that they should be helping their students to solve. They do little to help one understand what it means to be a man or a woman, how to discover one's identity and capabilities, how to become independently resourceful in a rapidly changing world, how to achieve personal satisfaction in a chosen walk of life, or how to develop a sense of individual and corporate human worth. Restless and dissatisfied students have a right to complain and question the relevance of their education in the face of this situation. They are being cheated of the important fundamentals of a general education, and at a time when so many young people spend virtually all of their lives between infancy and full majority in the framework of some kind of formal learning situation, it is irresponsible for the institutions to disclaim responsibility for these objectives.

The task of determining what to teach as a matter of general education, however, is no easy matter, and different peoples at different times have conceived of basic human needs and "the good human life" in different terms. In the dawn of Western culture, Greek students studied the heroic models of Achilles, Hector, Odysseus, and Penelope. Through them, they learned how to rule, how to run a household, how to sail a ship, how to fight a battle, or how to relate to the Gods. In the fourth century, Plato attacked this down to earth literary education from the point of view of an idealist philosophy and Aristotle defended relative values and empirical verification, but both of these philosophers, however much they differed on the particulars of their respective philosophies, established an ideal of rational and contemplative living as the highest value and activity of man. Cicero and Quintillian argued with Plato and Aristotle and established a rhetorical ideal of general culture which emphasized doing instead of knowing, especially in the areas of political activity. After Christ, St. Augustine saw a tension between spiritual and secular culture, and resolved it by abjuring the Roman arts for the Christian way. By the time of St. Thomas, human ideals were again identified with the disciplines of intellectual inquiry, more specifically with the seven liberal arts of the trivium and quadrivium. The men of the Middle Ages mainly employed these arts to better understand matters of religious faith.

In the age of Erasmus and More, people began to conceive of human development as the possession of genteel subject matters, especially classical poetry, history, and moral philosophy. By the end of the Renaissance, a new conflict of cultural ideals developed, instigated by Francis Bacon, between this older conception of "what is distinctly human" and what we would now call "the sciences." In the eighteenth century, man was again conceived in essentially rational terms by the
Continental Encyclopedists. For a time in the nineteenth century, the distinct nature of man as a human being was placed on trial by Charles Darwin who explained the origin of man from lower biological organisms, and Marx and Engels followed Darwin with the insistence that man and "the good life" were entirely the product of social struggle and economic factors.

A little over a century ago, Matthew Arnold and Thomas Huxley wrangled at Oxford over essentially the same issue which Bacon raised several hundred years earlier, and in our time, C. P. Snow insisted that these same "two culture," the scientific and the literary, were hopelessly divided. Snow's position made a case that the intellectual life of the whole of Western society is increasingly being split into two polar groups because our contemporary elite are being trained in two entirely different subject matters, on the one hand the new physical sciences, on the other hand, the traditional humane knowledges. Between the two, Snow argues, lies a gulf of mutual incomprehension. Now, of course, the "sciences of human behavior" occupy the privileged positions in the hierarchy of the esteemed ways of knowing.

What then shall be the ideal that will guide the general education of men and women at the end of the twentieth century? On this matter we can only speculate, but the more we speculate in public, the more we can expect to clarify the direction that guides the practice of our schools.

I would say that first and most importantly, general education in our time must be human centered. More than ever, when the mark of individual presence and personal accomplishment is disappearing, when man's freedom and dignity are being seriously challenged, and when crises of identity everywhere abound, mankind must be re-established as the most important study of man. Whether the specific focus of a course be in an area of the arts, sciences, or humanities, it should reflect distinctly human activities, highlight models of human excellence and achievement, and use its knowledge or methods in the service of fundamental human problems. It should deal with matters which arise from the individual and corporate experience of civilized men, and which cast light on issues which every intelligent man and woman living in the twentieth century will inevitably face at one time or another in his or her life.

Secondly, general education courses must avoid the ordinary topics and usual approaches of the traditional academic departments, and concern themselves with issues and ideas which cross traditional departmental lines. The regular departments have done much to develop and preserve standards of intellectual, disciplined excellence, but they have also been responsible for compartmentalizing issues and restricting the methods for studying them to a damaging degree. Teachers of general education must operate out of the awareness that
the traditional rubrics of examinations and terms papers, and understanding the printed page are limited scholarly skills. They should make room for artistic and modern communication media as means of demonstrating personal growth and awareness. After all, these forms of expression have a grammar, logic, and rhetoric as sophisticated as any system of letters, and they add dimensions of affective awareness often notably absent in the printed pages.

General education must free itself from the error that Descartes introduced into the intellectual world, that all truth can be gained by the use of one analytic method and one set of intellectual criteria, and whatever cannot be understood by this method and validated by these criteria must be rejected as false. The way men use their sensory apparatus will affect the way they formulate concepts, and a lack of experience can make it virtually impossible to achieve anything more than a conceptual pseudo knowledge of such important human values as compassion, respect, or selfless dedication.

Further, general education must acknowledge that men do not experience important problems in their lives or confront moral issues in terms of departmental categories, and even when such issues and problems can be defined in terms of one category, they are inseparably involved with others. As one student recently told me, when he was confronted by a pusher to buy illegal drugs, he was immediately faced with a moral, legal, social, biological, psychological, and economic problem, all at once. He could sort out these various aspects of the situation in his own mind, but they were simultaneously part of a larger issue which he had to deal with as a whole in order to make a decision. The whole was larger than the sum total of its parts, and partial decisions would not help him decide on a satisfactory course of action.

It is not inconsistent to propose formal learning which questions whether the traditional methods of academia hold the most appropriate solutions to the fundamental problems of human living. General education is not restricted to an aristocratic elite. Over forty percent of college age people are currently in college, and if schools are going to accept the responsibilities of helping them live more intelligent, humane, and rewarding lives, they simply must acknowledge that traditional professional academics have no monopoly on truth and open their classrooms to other ways of understanding, validating, and communicating intelligent living. As they open the doors of their classrooms, they may remind themselves that the greater portion of the monumental achievements in the arts, the sciences, in social institutions, and even in the humanities that are studied in formal schools were created or achieved by men who lived and worked outside the academy.

Thirdly, characteristic of its concern for interrelated human issues and interrelated methods of imagination and reason, general education must develop the arts of independent learning. It should teach
one how to question, how to determine facts, how to formulate and
test hypotheses, how to discover or invent, how to subject propositions
to critical examination, how to put theory into practice, and how to
personally arrange and order one's knowledge and experience. Conceived in these terms, general education should help one learn to intelli
gently confront ideas and experience and determine their value and
workability. Like the natural sciences, it should foster the mental habits
of making good inductive inferences from accurate empirical data. Like the social sciences, it should acquaint people with many differ
ing forms of human behavior, their causes, and their effects. Like the humanities, it should foster an examination of claims of value and ac
counts of experience that are not always definable or quantifiable, but
which give meaning and purpose to human existence. Like the fine
and performing arts, it should sensitize people to physical sensation,
standards of taste, and how materials, sensation, and experience can be
meaningfully organized and refined.

With the current knowledge explosion and the unprecedented
proliferation of raw data, it is virtually impossible for any collection
of specialist courses to cover all that one might want to know, even
about the different possible ways of knowing. No academic depart
ment or combination of courses taken over a period of two or four
years will ever deal with all that a college graduate will find himself
thinking about, even in the decade after his graduation. Given the
speed of change in contemporary society, and all that there is for
even the ordinary citizen to know, the only way of really helping him
to cope with the world he will live in is by developing arts of intelli
gent and independent resourcefulness. A "process education" is the
only kind of basic or general education that makes sense in our time.

A fourth characteristic of general education which is possibly more
of a correlative to what has already been said than a specific opera
tional objective is that general education should take place in an en
vironment appropriate to what is being studied. I am convinced that
students come to understand basic human values and intelligent op
erations of the mind best through a personal working relationship with
their instructors and their fellow students, and the learning which ac
crues from such working relationships is unquestionably as important
as whatever subject matter they may study. My experience has con
vinced me that it is important to engage in formal learning activities
outside of the classroom, at least on occasion, to free students from
the conditioned responses of lecture and question-recitation learning.
I have had most of my own best teaching and learning experiences in
classes that were held in private homes and in "on location" contexts
pertinent to the topic under investigation.

It is important that the values of community be placed at the center
of the learning experience so that unique individuals may relate to one
another on a one-to-one basis, and experience the way that teaching
and learning are inseparable and correlative activities. In sum, general education must take into consideration the affective, social, and sensory dimensions of learning—factors essential to learning as a lifelong activity.

Finally, in this discussion of general education I would like to suggest the importance of teachers providing living models of the learning they would like to see their students develop. It is paramount that every teacher offer himself as a testimony of the vitality in his own life of what he knows or what he can do. In the language of Plato’s *Phaedrus*, he must be the visible incarnation of his gods, the gods which provide him with the total pattern by which he educates and is himself educated. What he is must persuade or compel others to assent to the humanizing power of his own personal daemon.

I like to think of this educational process in terms of one person helping others grow by acquainting them with constructive examples of thinking, feeling, and acting. Thus, for all who are involved, such vicarious sharing of thought and experience becomes the basis not only of people discovering voids within themselves, but also of enlarging their competence and developing their character by assimilating qualitative models provided by others.

In such a context, all are teachers and have something to learn from the others. Naturally, the professional teacher responsible for designing the course will be expected to have the most to offer by virtue of his greater learning and greater living experience. But even he will ordinarily supplement what he has to offer by arranging conciliatory thought and experience in the form of the authors, artists, or other guest visitors that will make up his course syllabus. Few are the Socrateses who find completely within themselves and the experience of their students the total resources for even a semester of profitable learning.

Sharing thoughts and experiences is important, for it keeps centered in everyone’s mind that general education is concerned with a quality of living, and that everyone has a personal stake in not only knowing the possibilities for living a good life, but choosing one or responsibly constructing one for themselves, and living it.

Whether these objectives are mere rhetoric or genuinely operational is of serious concern to the teacher of a general education course. Obviously, it is of crucial importance whether the precepts can be practiced. On this matter I can only speak from my own experience and relate the results of one of the general education courses that I offered in an attempt to implement my own objectives. The fact that I also have offered other, and quite different, courses which also served these objectives has convinced me that general education admits teaching approaches and defining course topics limited only by the capabilities of the teachers who design them.

The subject matter for my illustrative course was the human
capacity for creative activity. The course was therefore not restricted to creation in the fine arts or the aesthetic response appropriate to them. In order to reflect the genuinely integrated character of my subject matter, and to sustain a concern for the human values which underlie many areas of creative activity, we sought to understand discovery, invention, innovation, and forms of unique expression as a basic human phenomenon—from discovery in mathematics and the natural sciences to innovation in law, mechanical design, theology, and the creative use of such modern devices as computers. In short, we tried to discover what lay behind the eternal cry of "Eureka!"

The pedagogical approach to my course attempted to be as creative as its subject matter. Fortunately, I was able to keep the enrollment of the course to a small group of seventeen young men and women who represented a diverse array of departmental majors. A seminar format was established to allow the greatest interplay of ideas and to experience as many personal viewpoints and establish as many person-to-person relationships as possible. The seminar form also helped discipline oral and rhetorical articulation (rather underdeveloped skills among present college students), and it seemed to promote a much more intense involvement in learning on the part of the students. For the most part, our meetings were held at my home on two evenings a week. In this way, the students became much more a part of a normal adult social milieu; we enjoyed the delights of my wife's baking, the students found refreshing contacts in meeting and relating to my young children. We were to a great extent free from the learning patterns conditioned by the traditional environment of the classroom; more inclined to let our distinct personalities emerge, unbound by many of the inhibitions that question-recitation activity imposes; willing to discuss more openly and honestly course-related questions of most pressing personal concern.

We spent the first third of the course in a rather traditional fashion, discussing the literature of creativity. We began with a somewhat historical-anthropological survey of man's earliest creative efforts as he first dealt with an explanation of the natural world. We read Giorgio de Santillana's *The Origins of Scientific Thought*. We discussed the imaginative myth-making process that produced poetic explanations of the natural order, such as that found in the Book of Genesis. We discussed Pythagoras' discovery of number and the way he based both a physical and metaphysical explanation of reality upon it. We analyzed the quasi-scientific aphorisms of Heraclitus as he asserted a substratum underlying reality in meter and image. We read a collection of essays in the September, 1958, *Scientific American* and discussed with J. Bronowski the relationship between discovery, invention, and creation, and the common bond and the distinguishing differences between a scientific discovery and the creation of a work of art. We studied examples of innovation in mathematics, physics, biology, and
technology. We read about the physiology of the imagination, and discussed psychologist Frank Barron’s descriptive categories of creative artists and creative scientists. We turned to Bruster Ghislein’s The Creative Process and read the personal accounts of the creative experiences of such people as Albert Einstein, Vincent Van Gogh, A. E. Housman, W. B. Yeats, Henry Moore, D. H. Lawrence, Wolfgang Mozart, and Pablo Picasso. We discussed theories of poetic creation of John Dryden, William Wordsworth, Jean Cocteau, and Samuel Taylor Coleridge. We talked about Poincare’s mathematical mind and Nietzsche’s philosophical mind. We studied C. G. Jung’s theory of archetypes to explain artistic inspiration, and R. W. Gerard’s study of the biological basis of the imagination. Concluding our readings with John Dewey’s Art as Experience, we discussed the integration of human capabilities and learned how, in actual experience, intellect, imagination, and body work together for order, perfection, and meaning; that the basic creative principles are indeed common to all men as men, no matter how they manifest themselves, and that even within our own most common experiences we could discover some basis for our own forms of creative activity.

Our readings and discussions prepared us for the second third of the course which brought to our meetings ten accomplished professionals who had either distinguished themselves through their academic study of creativity, or who were publicly acknowledged creative individuals. We were now prepared to depart from learning only from books. We were expecting other than mere conceptual fruits from an experiential contact with the men and women whose lives in some way dealt with or exemplified a creative process. It was the task of these professionals to communicate, by their presence, in their work, and through their example, something of what was involved in the act of creation. The presentations of our guests loosely paralleled our readings.

Sister Suzanne Kelly, an historian and philosopher of science, talked about discovery and innovation in the natural sciences and mathematics. Professor Harvey Bender, a geneticist, brought us into the world of his laboratory, explained what was involved in his research manipulating genetic factors in mosquitoes and flies, and discussed with us the human implications of his work.

Professor John Santos, head of the psychology department, explained the way in which psychologists attempt to measure and define creativity. Donald Vogl, a painter, brought us to his home where he showed us literally hundreds of his paintings, took us through his studio to give us some idea of how he works, and discussed with us his personal ideas about art as he demonstrated watercolor painting for us.

Richard Stevens, one of the more creative and renowned photographers in the midwest, shared with us some fifty or seventy photographs.
which were expressive of either his own personal visions, feelings, or representations of psychological states of mind. He discussed the darkroom techniques of color solarization and the way they enabled a photographer to abstract his ideas and make them visually more universal. We discussed the problems and values of the human figure as an object of photographic art, and asked a number of questions of his model, who was also present for our discussion. We talked about the working relationship between the photographer and his model.

Peter Michelson, a well-known poet, read many of his poems for us, discussed their experiential origins, and took us through various stages of a poem in process. Professor Donald Middleman, then head of Notre Dame's computer science department, demonstrated the way he is currently producing graphic designs by programming mathematical formulae into the computer. We marvelled at the variety of visual relationships possible between abstract number and its corresponding visual design, drawn for us with as many as eight styles in as many as thirty-two different colors.

Otto Seeler, an architect, brought our seminar over to the Church of Our Lady of Loretto on the St. Mary's College campus, and spoke to us of the form, design, and architectural engineering of one of the more unique churches in the area, a product of his work. He discussed the problems of a practicing architect, and the concerns of the artist who must organize space and design spatial and visual relationships to facilitate a specified kind of human activity.

Professor Thomas Shaffer, attorney and currently Dean of the Notre Dame School of Law, discussed the creative use of law as a device for promoting the kind of values (in this case based on justice) that bring together a lawyer and his client.

Father John Dunne, C.S.C., Professor of Theology at Notre Dame, addressed himself to the topic of creative innovation in theology. Father Dunne had just completed his second book, The Search for God in Time and Memory, and was at the point of trying to personally assess and evaluate the work he had just completed. He told us how he began his work by suspending all dogmatic commitments, and how through an intense study of the personal "religious" experiences of great historical figures, he came to new (and quite original!) understandings of what he believed to be the nature of the human experience of God, the basis of all subsequent ecclesiastical doctrinal formulation. He shared with us his unique methodology of a search, a search to find new and contemporary significance in what he held and his Church defined as the eternal truths of the Christian religion.

Basically, these ten professionals addressed themselves to three questions: what and who am I as a man, what do I do as a professional, and what personal value is there for me in what I do as a professional. In addressing themselves to these questions, they shared with us themselves, their work, and the method of their creative en-
deavors. The students in my seminar consequently experienced what they could never have received from simply reading accounts of these people’s work or their creative processes. They had the basis of some living relationships with creative men and women, their work, and their personal presence.

It was my intention that such person-to-person contact give my students some experience through which they might discover within themselves a basis for creative activity, for during the final third of the course I required that each student take his or her turn at performing the same role that the ten professionals performed. Each student was to prepare and present a creative project of his or her own, and report to the group about his or her work, and the resulting personal growth or satisfaction, if either occurred.

I asked my students not to do a traditional type of academic study. Term papers on creativity would not qualify as a course project. I encouraged the class to adopt non-verbal forms of expression. I was prepared to accept complete failure in the execution of a project provided that the student sufficiently learned from his efforts how much discipline separated his work from acceptable standards. I believe that a teacher owes each student critical feedback on the quality of his work, but I also believe that it is possible to judge a student’s work in terms of his learning process, even if the final product of his work is a disappointment.

The quality of the projects was, for the most part, well beyond my expectation. One student who wanted to make his first film produced in 16 mm what was later acclaimed by the campus student film makers as the finest student film to date. He discussed with the other members of our class the concept of his film, and some of the difficulties he encountered shooting it. He showed us the rushes of the film before his editing and cutting of the soundtrack. At this point we still all wondered what could possibly come out of the 1800 feet of black and white and color film he presented. After thirty more hours of work in the cutting room, and the reduction of the film to 800 feet, the artistic conception of the film emerged, and we discussed not only the product, but the student’s changing views in the process of his work.

Several students did more traditional projects in creative writing. One wrote a series of short stories, another a collection of poems. Another student assembled a slide show, projecting images simultaneously from two projectors. He accompanied his slides with a poetic narration that he also wrote on the theme of loneliness and isolation. There was a sculpture project, a city planning project, a mass psychodrama entitled “Audience,” in which some two hundred students participated one warm spring evening. One student, a government major who had been singing in the glee club for four years, arranged a piece of eight-part harmony for four class members to perform by doubling their voices on tape in the recording studio. An English major did a
series of twelve paintings, judged to be of rather high quality for a
beginner by two art students who were in the class. One of the stu-
dents in the class, a biology major later honored as St. Mary's Col-
ge student, a biology major later honored as St. Mary's Col-
lege valedictorian,* traced four years of her personal experience and
development leading to her discovery of a possible vaccine for the pre-
vention of leukemia. She spent the year following her graduation in
Scotland under the auspices of the Fulbright Foundation pursuing this
work. She also composed and sang to her own guitar accompani-
ment, her valedictory "address," and offered this performance, too, as
a course project. She later presented me with a signed commencement
program that read across the cover: "For the courage / To dare and
and to do / Thank you."

There was a student whose efforts ran into great difficulties, and
who, I must say, missed much of what I had hoped the course would
offer. He was a psychology major who wanted to write an autobiogra-
phy and justify his efforts in the context of the course according to his
behavioral definition of creativity—a definition which no one in the
course wanted to accept. He insisted that creativity could be accounted
for only in terms of the organization of stimuli-response patterns, and
that if he organized and accounted for such patterns in his own life
he would have a genuinely creative project that fit his definition of
creativity. When it came time for him to present his project, he re-
fused to let anybody see any of the autobiography, displayed the bulk
of what he had written (some ninety pages), and simply described
in principle what he attempted to do. He complained, in the final
analysis, that nobody could possibly judge whether or not his project
had been creative anyway, since we had never agreed on an opera-
tional definition of creativity, and hence had no "key" by which to
either measure or judge his work. After almost two hours of discus-
sion, the class almost persuaded him to share his actual work with
them, but, alas, he refused.

I do not know if there is any way I could adequately test or
measure the success or failure of my course. I can say that I was quite
impressed with the quality of work that the students achieved. I can
say that I have never taught a class where the morale was so high and
where the students made such an effort to work. I think that to a great
degree they understood that the course was a collective learn-
teaching experience, and they simply didn't want to let the other mem-
ers of the group down; they wanted to do their share. I am con-
vinced that the rapport that the group established on a personal basis
created a true academic community in the finest sense of the term.

Towards the end of the course most of the students, at one time
or another, brought a friend with them to our meetings. It seemed as

* Women from St. Mary's College can take classes at Notre Dame under
the auspices of a co-exchange program.
though they were trying to initiate them into the small academic community we had established. A few weeks after one of these guests visited our class, he wrote a letter to me asking to be admitted to my following year's Creativity course. He wrote in part:

One of the things that impressed me the most was the community the seminar had evolved into. Whatever those fifteen or sixteen people are doing, they were friends about it. The people in the seminar seemed to share their whole selves with each other; not just their academic selves, but their whole selves. The last time I participated in that sort of community was in Professor Costello's freshman Honors English class. Professor Costello really opened our eyes up to a lot of different art forms, and, most important, to each other. So I think I know how valuable and how rewarding the Creativity Seminar sort of community is. I also know that that kind of community is no accident.

To conclude my essay, I want to share with you two quotations, one ancient and one modern, which, summarily, emphasize the concerns which guided this experimental general education course. The first, from Erich Kahler's latest book, *The Disintegration of Form in the Arts*, highlights the problems of academic professionalism and specialization. He writes:

Scholars and scientists, who in their research control most intricate rational operations, may be seen sometimes lacking all sense of reason when faced with issues of general human import. Those 600 medical, or rather anti-medical scientists at Fort Detrick in Maryland who prepare the most devilish kinds of genocide, the physical and chemical engineers who work on the refinement of nuclear weapons, the military planners, the "think tanks" who have calculated all rationally foreseeable circumstances and tell us that, given adequate protective measures like getting used to spending our lives in fashionable caves, not the whole nation would perish in a third world war, but only a mere 60 to 100 million people—such experts, if confronted with the question of broadly human implications, would answer, with the pride of their professional amorality: "These matters exceed our competence; what we are concerned with are purely technical, rational problems." Limitation to strictly specialistic concerns has become a foremost intellectual virtue, and thus technical rationality serves universal potentialities which human reason must regard as patent madness and as monstrous crimes against humanity.
The indictment implicitly poses the special educational challenge to which teachers of general education must address their teaching. Professional competence never excuses more fundamentally human obligations. Nothing of fundamental concern to mankind can be defined away on the grounds that “such matters exceed our competence.”

The second remark was expressed nineteen hundred years ago by Epictetus, and may be of comfort to those who are afraid of not being able to measure quantitively the learning that goes on in courses that attempt to “educate for life.”

Even sheep do not vomit up their grass and show the shepherds how much they have eaten; but when they have internally digested the pasture, they produce externally wool and milk. Show not your theorems to the uninstructed, but show the acts which come from their digestion.

It is my hope that remarks such as these will remain in our minds and guide our teaching and our learning. We must never lose sight of the fact that human beings and their most cherished values give the greatest vitality to learning, and that if general education is education for life, the measure of our success in this most serious endeavor is not so much what we say about it, but how we live it.