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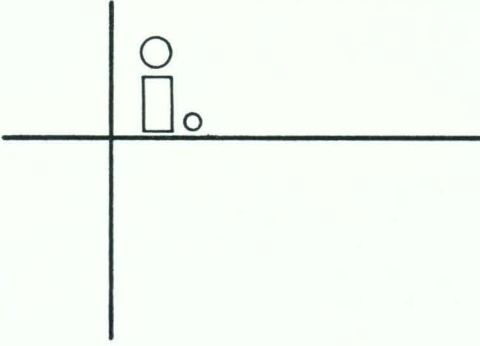


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Don't Just Talk About It

by DANIEL R. KROLL

Like the weather, everyone seems to be talking about General Education but no one seems to be doing anything about it. For that matter many administrators wonder just what General Education really is. When an educator can remark that "General Education is anything outside a student's major," it is time for a redefinition of the constituent which distinguishes a baccalaureate degree from a trade school diploma.

General Education is the kind of education which *all* enlightened citizens—regardless of their vocation—should share. It promotes precise, orderly, and effective communication. It acquaints students with conceptual approaches peculiar to various groups of disciplines. It provides students with a fundamental understanding of the world of nature, of themselves, of their society, and of their own and other cultures. It helps students develop values which give significance to life. It introduces students to pleasurable experiences in the humanities and in the arts. It provides a basis for action. In short, it contributes to one's personal and civic fulfillment, prompting him to search for a higher quality of life. *But General Education is more than a cluster of departmental offerings.* As the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education pointed out last year, ". . . general education has now collapsed into neglect exemplified by the introductory departmental courses which ignore the needs of the non-majors and by survey courses which whisk through large amounts of material with too little depth. The oft-proposed solution—to let students take anything they want—amounts to an abandonment of undergraduates by the faculty." General Education courses should not be mere professional stepping-stones to sophisticated specialized study. They should be self-contained

rather than sequential. They should stress significance and principles rather than facts, appreciation rather than skills. They should relate to contemporary life. *And, most important*, they should be taught by student-centered teachers.

If what you have read so far has significance for you, by all means plan to attend the annual meeting of the Association for General and Liberal Studies, October 18-20, on the beautiful and comfortable campus of Oklahoma State University, Stillwater. The keynote speaker is Dr. Harold L. Hodgkinson, President of the American Association for Higher Education, an expert in curricular affairs. Also featured is Dr. Richard Wilson, Vice President for the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges; it is time that we give more attention to *community college/four-year college* relations, especially the articulation of General Education programs. There will be presentations and discussions of successful General Education programs at the University of Utah, at Austin College, and at Tarrant Community College.

Because the meeting of the AGLS coincides with the fall recess, most students will be away from our campus. There are ample on-campus accommodations for participants at the Union Club. (Stillwater has its Holiday Inn and other inexpensive accommodations, too.)

Tulsa and Oklahoma City have international airports, a little more than an hour away (by rented car). There are also daily flights on the Frontier Airline from Oklahoma City and Wichita, Kansas. The excellent Texas Chief (AMTRAK) has daily runs through Perry (24 miles away), from Chicago and from Houston. (We can provide transportation to and from Perry.)

Plan to visit Stillwater this October. Learn about successful education programs, renew your energies by associating with other committed educators, and, incidentally, enjoy a fine Broadway comedy—the conference won't be *all* work.

(Perhaps you have noted Louis B. Mayhew's article in the April, 1973, issue of *Change*, which states "Oklahoma State University . . . is currently producing as great a variety of educational program reforms as can be found anywhere in the United States.")

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