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Interdisciplinary Perspectives earnestly solicits contributions dealing with the theory and practice of general and liberal studies. Articles should be limited to thirty double-spaced typed pages. Rebuttals and other comments on published articles should be limited to five double-spaced pages. Documentation should be included in the text. Send one copy held by paper clip, with a self-addressed stamped envelope, to the Editor, Interdisciplinary Perspectives, College of Basic Studies, Boston University, 871 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston, Massachusetts 02215.
Send Manuscripts!

As Editor, I "periodically" face the prospect of publishing every page on hand, delaying publication until Editorial Board suggestions can be acted on by hopeful authors, overruling the Editorial Board, or turning the entire task to someone else. Since you have a copy of Volume 9, #1 in your hands, I must have exercised one of the first three options. I hope you will instantly discern that it was the second.

Send manuscripts!

The Weber State Conference was a most satisfactory one for everyone I talked to. A large number of informative and/or entertaining panels and other presentations, engaged in by large numbers of people (reportedly over 300) from 27 states, in a grand setting, hosted warmly by Dr. Seshachari and countless colleagues — these added up to an element of the Association for General and Liberal Studies that members not present will regret missing.

Send manuscripts!

You will receive (or already have received) news of recommendations proposed by the Executive Board concerning membership and other fees. As Editor of a publication expensive to set up and print, I can only hope for agreement with the recommendations.

Send manuscripts!

No doubt you have inferred from these repeated pleas that Interdisciplinary Perspectives does not have the three-year backlog reported by some larger journals. Your inference is correct. My request at the Annual Conference elicited several offers, some of which have arrived. My comments about procedures (the use of an editorial "jury") also elicited a number of comments, all supportive of the desirability of such a jury. Although the procedure is necessarily time-consuming, and could, I suppose, be seen as an indication of distrust in my judgment, I believe the advantages outweigh the disadvantages. Your comments will be appreciated — along with your manuscripts!

G. F. E.
When I first proposed this paper some months ago I had a number of specific purposes in mind. First, I'd grown interested in the development of a concept in American higher education which has been termed cooperative education. Secondly, I wondered about the linkages between cooperative education and what traditionally we have called general or liberal education. Thirdly, I wondered if the linkages between these two concepts were of recent origin or have they existed for a long time without formal recognition. Fourthly, I wondered if this "new synthesis" was something that could have a significant impact on the quality of education of today's students, especially those students pursuing a liberal education. Finally I wondered if it was possible to answer all these questions in the short space allotted to me. I am pleased to report that I have, I believe, the answers to the first four questions.

For brevity and with the hope of sidestepping some fundamental disagreements which could cause us to never address the topic I propose to discuss, I will assume that we all have a basic definition of what is meant by a general or liberal education, that part of a student's academic program which is the core of learning and knowledge. A liberal education is that set of academic experiences where students develop understanding and competencies in the arts, the humanities, the social and behavioral sciences, the physical, biological, earth and space sciences, mathematics and in oral and written communications.

I wish not to assume that we all have a common definition and understanding of cooperative education. This concept, which is distinctly American, was born at the University of Cincinnati in 1906. It enjoyed a quiet and unglamor-
ous beginning. In 1909, three years later, Northeastern University adopted a cooperative education curriculum and in 1930 Antioch College did the same. By 1960, 60 colleges and universities had incorporated cooperative education in their academic programs. In 1970, only ten years later, the number of institutions swelled to 127. Seven years later, today, in 1977, over 1,000 collegiate institutions report themselves as having a cooperative education program. It is alleged that over 200,000 students participate in co-op programs annually.

I hesitate to offer a simple definition to this concept for fear of losing half of my readers. The simple definition, commingling periods of campus study with periods of off-campus “on the job” academic learning experiences, is enough to turn some “liberal educationally oriented” individuals away, looking for a new paper to criticize. The nub of this problem, however, is the vexing conflict between the value of experiential learning versus the value of formal academic classroom education. Regrettably, experiential learning is viewed by some as a dilution of academic quality while others believe that “real” or “lasting” learning comes about only through experience. In my opinion, this dichotomy is unfortunate as learning occurs in both spheres.

As I thought about what to quote to report to you that there is a linkage between formal academic classroom education and experiential learning, I was tempted by a number of sources. Incidentally, I wish to pursue the notion that the linkages between cooperative education or however you choose to define it — be it experiential education, internships, practica, field work, off-campus learning opportunities or whatever — and general or liberal education is a long standing relationship. I don’t believe it is new or of recent origin. It is a relationship which has not enjoyed wide acceptance.

On July 2, 1862, then President Abraham Lincoln signed the Morrill Land Grant Act offering each state free public land in order to “promote the liberal and practical education of the industrial classes in the several pursuits and professions of life.” Alfred North Whitehead, in The Aims of Education, stated “first hand knowledge is the ultimate basis of intellectual life. To a large extent book-learning conveys second hand information, and as such can never rise to the importance of immediate practice.” Many have entered the debate on the value of a liberal education versus a practical one. I wish to stress here that the problem lies not with the value of one type of education, a liberal education versus a practical education; the problem really is that the two types of educations are viewed as in conflict with each other — that one is right and the other is wrong. That probably is the greatest single disadvantage of this debate. As former U.S. Commissioner of Education Earl McGrath stated, “one of the basic errors made by earlier advocates of general education as well as by their opponents was the assumption that an unavoidable conflict exists between specialized vocational training and the goals of a liberal education. The more realistic and, in fact, theoretically authentic conception of higher education for a democratic society is that the two types can and ought to be pursued simultaneously, but in balanced proportions.”

The references here cited suggest that these two concepts are related to each other. I do also hope to convey that practical and theoretical education deserve careful attention and review especially in these troubled times in American higher education and especially in the difficult times which the liberal arts have experienced during the past decade. There is increasing evidence which suggests that students and the general society as a whole are less appreciative and understanding of the value of a general or liberal education. This decline
in attractiveness is, in my opinion, related to the rise in attractiveness of certain types of academic majors which have obvious work-world linkages, for example, accounting, business administration, etc. The task at hand is to find ways to commingle the values of a general and liberal education with a practical preparation for life following completion of formal academic study. For too long many in the mainstream of liberal education have left that particular activity to someone else. The questions are simple — can we leave this to someone else and should we? Another way of asking the same question, can the values and traditions of a general or liberal education survive if we leave this important and extremely attractive component preparation for life after graduation to someone else?

Without intending to suggest that it is easy to philosophically and practically commingle experiential and liberal education, I do wish to suggest that what is proposed here is that students be permitted to undertake off-campus internship experiences which are integrated within their undergraduate curriculum. In meeting requirements for their degrees most students are responsible for completing a core of courses to meet basic requirements, a selection of courses to satisfy major requirements and finally a cluster of elective credits. While there are variations among colleges and universities this arrangement of credits is not uncommon. The essence therefore of this idea is to mesh experiential and liberal education by promoting undergraduate off-campus internship experiences which complement a student's undergraduate education by providing useful, effective information which assists the student to understand how he may make a useful contribution to society following graduation.

Off-campus internship experiences for credit need not be viewed as a dilution of academic standards for such experiences can be structured to provide significant individual cognitive development. Worthwhile internship experiences are most frequently realized when faculty and student work together to develop an academic component to the internship experience which serves to integrate the practical work experiences with the undergraduate curriculum. The application of theory to practice and their integration serve as the bridge or link between cognitive and experiential education. When off-campus learning experiences are structured in this fashion, it is easy to assign a credit value to the experience and to make this credit become a part of the student’s undergraduate program.

While we are here attempting to liberalize that which is represented by a liberal education by permitting academically oriented internship experiences to augment the curriculum, one must at the same time call for a liberalizing of the many occupationally related majors which are just as closed-minded to the values of a liberal education as some liberal arts people are to giving credibility to experiential education. This is a two-way street which demands openness on both sides and not just a willingness on the part of liberal arts to accept what for so long has been viewed in negative terms.

Increasingly I have learned to believe firmly in the value of a broadbased liberal education as a preparation for the complex world which every student faces following graduation. In my judgment we must provide for our students every opportunity to take full advantage of the multiplicity of learning experiences as preparation for the future. A liberal education is a worthwhile experience but we cannot stop there for we must begin to articulate the values of a liberal education in practical, down-to-earth, non-intellectual, if you will, statements so that all can understand what we mean when we say that a liberal
education is an effective preparation for life after graduation. We would be in a much better position to begin to articulate the advantages of a liberal education if at the same time we were willing to recognize the value of academically oriented, off-campus learning experiences which would serve as an addendum to the basic classroom instruction and cognitive development we offer. Internships, practicums, field work, cooperative education, experiential learning, call them what you will, they have been valuable experiences for many and, in my judgment, there is no need to separate them from that which we mean by a liberal education.
Most students begin college with little idea about the field of study they will eventually pursue. Some have made a decision in this area, but often have only a vague notion of what is implied in such a decision. Yet, in both cases, the general pattern of liberal arts colleges is to put such students into a general studies program for two years consisting of required or strongly recommended courses. While students may gain a broad educational background, those with little idea about their future area of concentration must base a decision regarding the "major" on a brief introduction through one or two courses, while those who had a specific interest are often forced to delay entrance into that field. In either case students are often into their third year before they can confidently determine whether or not they have found an area of study consistent with their personal development and future goals. Subsequent realization that the chosen field is not the appropriate one may be irrelevant because students do not have the time, money, or incentive to switch to a more meaningful area of concentration. The current employment difficulties facing college graduates further compounds this problem.

In part to deal with the above concerns, but also as part of a much more far-reaching philosophical consideration of its educational program, Whittier College reevaluated its curriculum and substantially changed the traditional four-year format. One of the major aspects of Whittier's new curriculum is the concept of the "exploratory year." This paper is an exploration of the nature
and benefits derived from such a year and the consequent restructuring of the four-year experience.

Curricular reform at Whittier began during the academic year 1969-70 as an examination of the academic calendar. It became evident that any changes, if they were to be responsive to student needs and new trends in higher education, would have to be more sweeping than simply changing the calendar. A task force consisting of professors from the departments of Psychology, Philosophy and Religion, Music, History, and Chemistry was established during the summer of 1970. After considerable discussion and exploration with all segments of the Whittier College community, the task force presented a "New Curriculum Model for Undergraduate Students" (Whittier College, 1970) at the beginning of the 1970-71 academic year.

During that year an executive committee consisting of three faculty members, ultimately responsible to the Faculty’s Educational Policies Committee, was established by President Frederick M. Binder. This executive committee, after extensive consultation with Whittier faculty members, administrators, students, and educational officials external to the college, recommended implementation of the new curriculum beginning with the 1971-72 academic year.

Among some of the basic assumptions underlying the new curriculum are the following:

1) students cannot learn all there is to know;
2) faculty, especially with the knowledge explosion of the twentieth century, cannot determine which "package" of knowledge is essential to the educated person;
3) students face an increasingly complex world in which they will need to make important decisions about themselves and their future goals.

In light of these assumptions the curriculum emphasizes the development of the whole person, especially the ability to make responsible decisions about one's self. The educational process is considered to go far beyond the traditional classroom activities and advisement; co-curricular aspects of the student's program, and service to college and community (the latter consistent with Whittier's Quaker heritage) are seen as legitimate and essential segments of the educational experience. In terms of the academic program the student is encouraged to develop at least tolerance for other viewpoints, self-responsibility regarding his educational program, and the ability to learn how to learn so that he can function positively after graduation. These goals are promoted through such aspects of the new curriculum as "ways of knowing," the Educational Design, and the aforementioned restructuring of the four-year experience.

Ways of knowing is a phrase borrowed from Phillip Phenix's book, Realms of Meaning (McGraw-Hill, New York, 1964). It implies that there are different ways of understanding what is truth or, more simply put, different ways of learning. The assumption made by Whittier College is that content of courses and disciplines should not be the sole focus of an education. Given the tremendous increase in things to be known, it seems more important to develop in students the ability to learn how to learn so that they can continue to develop after graduation. How various disciplines develop their knowledge, then, is given equal status with the subject matter of disciplines.

In addition, since different disciplines have different ways of knowing, students are encouraged to study several ways of knowing in depth to increase their awareness of other points of view. In other words, since the chemist
undersstands his world in a way different from that of the philosopher, it would be a liberating experience for a chemistry student to study as a philosopher does, thus breaking him out of possible disciplinary encapsulation. Such course work is termed an area of contrast.

Phenix identified six ways of knowing — aesthetics, ethics, empirics, synnoetics, synoptics and symbolics. Although these particular terms are undergoing reevaluation at Whittier, they are the ways of knowing currently in formal use. While it may be argued that students taking a normal background of general studies courses will come into contact with different ways of knowing, it is the shift in emphasis to this concept and the subsequent development of sensitivity to other points of view (other ways of thinking) which are the main attributes of this approach.

When a student has determined his major area of interest, he develops, in close consultation with his academic advisor, an educational program consistent with his current interests and future goals. This program (the Educational Design) while subject to revision as the student develops, outlines the student’s goals, his field of concentration, area of contrast, and elective courses. Although many students will follow the traditional major, the field of concentration facilitates interdisciplinary studies and allows the student to be creative if consistent with his overall goals. Whatever the final shape of the Design, the student is encouraged to view his four-year college experience as a coherent whole and has participated in making decisions about himself.

The Educational Design embodies the restructuring of the four-year experience. After the initial year, students who have decided upon a field of concentration study in that area during their second and third years. While they may take more courses in this area during their fourth year, it is expected that by that time they will have become competent scholars in their discipline and, to a certain extent, encapsulated in the way of knowing of that discipline. During their fourth year, students take at least one senior colloquium and several courses in an area of contrast.

The senior colloquia bring together students from all disciplines with a particular topic, for example “The City of the Future.” Students in one field thus see how students from other areas think and the different concerns they may have regarding the same issue. The contrast to concentration asks students to study another field in depth. Thus the chemist may learn how the philosopher, artist, or political scientist come to understand the world. Taken together, the senior colloquium and areas of contrast act to integrate the student’s knowledge by putting into perspective the different ways of thinking while simultaneously liberating him from the encapsulation that occurred within his own discipline. Additionally he should develop a tolerance and willingness to question, consistent with the liberal arts perspective.

The four year experience is indeed reversed. Rather than going through a broadening experience during the first two years with subsequent specialization and possible encapsulation by the time of graduation, students move into their chosen field of concentration when they have made a choice and, we hope, go through a liberating experience during their last year. For this process to be effective, however, it is essential that the student be able to make a responsible decision regarding his future goals. It is here that the importance of the first or exploratory year becomes apparent.

There are three key aspects to the exploratory year approach — the initial module, the mentoring system, and self-evaluation. For the student to be able to explore effectively, and thus make a responsible choice regarding his future
course of study, he must have a chance to experience the nature of the various disciplines he might be interested in. To facilitate this, each department offers a course termed an initial module. In such a course the student is to be exposed to the discipline — its subject matter, ways of knowing, and the life style of its practitioners. Thus it goes beyond the traditional introductory course and is different from content-oriented general studies courses. Students should be able to determine not only whether or not they like the subject matter, but also whether or not they would be interested in a vocation related to that subject matter. Classes are limited in enrollment to assure close student contact with the faculty member who serves as one model of the discipline.

Students are encouraged to take a number of such courses until, and often even after, they come to a decision about their future goals. Regular courses may be taken concurrently and students are free to end exploration whenever they are confident of their area of concentration. On the other hand, students having second thoughts regarding their original choice are free to return to the exploratory approach. (Since Whittier has adopted a seven-session calendar (three five week sessions in the fall and three in the spring when the normal load is two classes per session and a four week session in January with a one course load) students can take up to twelve exploratory courses in one year (none in January) and can switch to their area of concentration at the beginning of any session. Thus there is more flexibility than in the semester or quarter systems.)

However, to expect students just out of high school to make such important decisions responsibly without assistance is too idealistic. Thus the exploratory year operates in conjunction with a system of mentors. Mentors are special advisors who, although members of specific disciplines, are responsible for encouraging students to explore in appropriate areas, based on a student's high school record, stated interests and goals, and most importantly, personal interaction. In other words, mentors are not to function as recruitment officers for their respective departments and thus do not function as the traditional academic advisor. Rather they are to serve as a friend and guide to the student as the student endeavors to find out who he is and where he is going. Once a student has selected an area of concentration he will work with a regular academic advisor, but retain his mentor for any areas of concern he might have in the future.

Finally, near the end of the exploratory year, each student is to write an evaluation of his first year experience. Thus he will have to consider his present condition, future goals and to what extent he is progressing toward them. Moreover, his evaluation will provide valuable data on the exploratory year itself, enabling the college to modify the program in ways consistent with students' needs as part of a continuing reevaluation of the exploratory process.

What are the advantages of such a system? First, the student develops an awareness of himself and his future goals early enough so that he might develop an educational program consistent with those factors. When combined with the Educational Design, the student should have an understanding of his particular educational experience and see it as a coherent whole rather than as a collection of courses taken because someone said they should be taken. This combined with the senior colloquia and area of contrast in the senior year should help to develop an individual with the breadth of a liberal arts education, an awareness of other viewpoints, and the ability to act responsibly in the environment he enters after college. While these goals certainly are not new, it appears that that new curriculum at Whittier, begin-
ning with the exploratory year, may provide a more effective way of achieving them.

**Evaluation.** Four years after its inception faculty and student reaction to Whittier College’s new curriculum is quite favorable. The exploratory year is seen as one of the more positive aspects of this program. Student evaluations indicate satisfaction with the variety of initial modules offered and the opportunities both to explore and to move immediately into their major areas of interest once exploration has taken place. On the average, students take five initial modules during their exploratory experience.

The exploratory year is not without its problems, however. Faculty are not in total agreement about what should constitute the exploratory course. Thus student experience may vary considerably from one department to another. More importantly, though, the exploratory year, preparation of the Educational Design and Whittier’s new curriculum in general require a strong commitment on the part of the faculty to advisement. While idealistically such a commitment should be the norm, it does place a heavy time demand on faculty members who have other responsibilities as well. This problem is compounded by the natural inclination of some students to avoid their mentors or advisors and delay development of their Educational Design. More effective freshman orientation programs and a Director of Advisement have improved this situation, however, and such problems are less critical now than during the curriculum’s early stages.

In summary, most faculty and students are well-satisfied with the New Curriculum at Whittier College. Students play a greater role in the development of their educational program aided by the exploratory year concept and the advisement process. While operating in the liberal arts framework they are able to plan ahead in terms of both academic and vocational interests, thus deriving greater relevance from the liberal arts approach.
Both the Hebrew notion of the fall and the Greek concept of hubris have taught us that human endeavors are essentially acts of pride and possibly acts of arrogance. I suppose that a paper entitled "Improving Humanities Education" would be judged to be as at least impertinent in as much as it suggests that the teaching of the humanities can or ought to be improved. But I believe it is possible to improve the way that body of human intellectual and artistic study of man as man we call the humanities is addressed and actualized in the formal process of education. Indeed we would not be about the things we are about at this conference if we all did not believe in the possibility of this improvement.

Moreover, I begin with the supposition that humanities education must be improved: the reason for this imperative is the critical question I wish to address. Its importance inheres in the very raison d'être of the humanities and the connection they have to liberal education. And my remarks are intended to underscore this connection. Quite simply I shall argue that the unending attempts to integrate the humanities and by implication the values they represent into the lives of men and women is what constitutes not only a liberal education but the very core of life as human.

To those of us who are in the process of trying to do liberal education it is apparent that the imperative to improve humanities education springs from the place the humanities traditionally have had in the liberal arts endeavor. But it is not always so evident to us that the improvement of humanities education involves something more profound. It involves the justification of the endeavor itself. It is to this justification that I wish to turn.
In doing this my first task is to discuss these two related issues as I understand them, addressing the appropriate place of the humanities in the process of liberal arts education while suggesting the reasons why humanities education necessarily must be improved if we are to save our civilization from wreckage. This is an overly ambitious thesis but one I think worthwhile enough to ask you patiently to endure. Whether it is arrogant or not, I ask you to be the judges.

In order to make my point I shall describe what I understand as liberal education with the help of some who have preceded me, and offer a justification that hopefully will explain the necessity for and, indeed, the justice of this kind of education; and then briefly discuss the relationships of the humanities to liberal education.

First of all it seems to me that we must reject the traditional argument or the folk wisdom which maintains that liberal arts provide a very nice polish for individuals who are fated to live in a world which requires skills and techniques for survival and recognize that their study is necessary to the freedom of the person as well as to his or her personal effectiveness. In other words we must argue that liberal arts education is an essential part of the process of being human. It is not a mere accidental attribute which makes life a little less burdensome. Indeed, a truly liberal education prepares people to be upset with the world as it is and thus makes them uneasy about its imperfections; or so it seems to me.

That liberal arts education is not a mere gloss on life becomes evident when we remember that true education is not simply involved with training the individual for survival but rather it is that mode of activity which makes man a being unlike any other. My meaning may become clearer when we recall that civilization and education as dimensions of the same reality, the reality of mankind as humankind, are dependent on each other for their vitality. Ernest Boyer and Martin Kaplan put it more succinctly when they write: “Throughout human history, education has mirrored the state of civilization” and the state of education exemplifies the conditions of the times.¹

This observation, when coupled to the problems we face in guarding the permanent value of a liberal arts education in a world enamored of technology and change, suggests one of the problems we face as educators. The problem is this: In our diversity and because of our uniqueness as persons, we have at times lost sight of the integral connection between personality and community.²

In this oversight we have developed an educational ideology, perhaps a philosophy, which courts diversity at the expense of commonality. This courtship is not without appeal. Our diversity as individuals and as people is the source of our uniqueness as beings. Indeed the very nature of the liberal arts endeavor demands a respect for difference, variety, and the myriad ways men and women have addressed their conditions. Respect for this diversity must inform our lives and, more especially, our tasks as educators. Human genius, any great idea or moment in history, results from the shared experiences we labor to make lasting. Our laboring over meaning comes to fruition only when we allow an ambiance of freedom wherein we reason, consider, discuss and choose those ideas and matters which best adumbrate truth. Our moral dimension as educators is derived from and is dependent upon our openness to the truth, which in turn depends on our openness to various and sundry realities. In the diversity of the universe we find truth; thus, we must
seek, respect and welcome all responsible attempts to search out and comprehend the truth.

But what is truth? With Pilate we must realize that truth defies adequate definition while we affirm that it does exist and that it is rooted in what is. Jacques Maritain very adeptly expressed the essence of this idea when he wrote, "Truth is not a set of ready-made formulas to be passively recorded, so as to have the mind closed and enclosed by them. Truth is an infinite realm — as infinite as being — whose wholeness transcends infinitely our powers of perception" yet we are compelled to seek it out, and, therefore, we are compelled to entertain and allow the diversity which makes the search possible. Liberal arts education, if it is anything, is our involvement in the attempt to uncover the layers of truth which constitute reality, that which is.

Reality indeed involves diversity and uniqueness. In recognizing this we as educators must confront this diversity and in this confrontation we find many of the problems which riddle liberal arts education. Diversity is, as are all blessings, mixed. It is much more difficult to communicate and teach in a diversified setting. And those who argue for a common language and grammar for education are sometimes judged to be cowards in their confrontation with this difficulty. Moreover, it is sometimes argued that any common basis for intellectual pursuit is ideology in disguise and is, therefore, depending on one's point of view, heresy or dogma. Either the commonality of the terms of the dialogue is thought to stifle diversity or the diffusiveness of audience is believed to destroy commonality. That this debate has precedents is not disputed. Yet we need not give up hope if we recall that commonality as a basis of truth is never synonymous with sameness, nor is diversity the equivalent of idiosyncracy.

In light of this we need to remember that the connection between human personality and community inheres in their mutual dependence; that both are involved in the quest for truth which is, however obliquely put, the essence of both human uniqueness and human solidarity.

Liberal arts education, which assumes a common base for intellectual pursuit, is not a patina on brute matter; it is the participation of matter in the truth and, therefore, humanity and liberal arts may be said to depend on each other in as much as both participate in truth. J.F.A. Taylor puts it much better in his discussion of *Humanitas* when he says, "Essentially, *Humanitas* signifies the moral community to which all human beings are by exercise of right reason capable of belonging but to which no one belongs by the mere passion of heredity."* Humanitas is a moral estate, he says, and this when coupled with the propensity of man to seek the truth, constitutes the essential substance of human personhood.

All this leads me to affirm that a common core of liberal knowledge is possible because knowledge is possible. This epistemological postulate is the beginning of that real respect for the unity of knowing which has been the genius of Western civilization. But the question remains: what is meant by a general liberal arts education? What essential components go into the creation of a liberally educated person?

For your consideration the following ideas are proposed. They are adaptations of Ernest Boyer and Martin Kaplan's discussion of liberal education via a common curriculum and they represent my understanding of what a liberal arts experience does by way of educating the person to fulfillment.

To answer we must first ask what we should expect of a liberally educated, indeed, fully human person. To paraphrase Hannah Arendt, the educated
person is one who, existing in the present moment, is capable of understanding the past while preparing for the future. Education in Arendt's words involves "loving the world enough to assume responsibility for it."

Jacques Maritain substantiates the above characterization when he writes that the aim of education is

...to guide man in the evolving dynamism through which he shapes himself as a human person — armed with knowledge, strength of judgment, and moral virtues — while at the same time conveying to him the spiritual heritage of the nation and the civilization in which he is involved, and preserving in this way the century-old achievements of generations.\(^5\)

And again:

...the objective of basic liberal education is not the acquisition of science itself or of art itself, along with the intellectual virtues involved, but rather the grasp of their meaning and the comprehension of the truth and beauty they yield ... The objective of basic liberal education is to see to it that the young person grasps this truth or beauty through the natural powers and gifts of his mind and the natural intuitive energy of his reason backed up by his whole sensuous, imaginative, and emotional dynamism.\(^6\)

Such an education is multidimensional. For our purpose, however, we can detect three major dimensions as critical to liberal education. Liberal education involves an appreciation of the history of mankind and of the collective ideas of that history; it involves an awareness of past and present institutions, cultures, sciences and arts; and it must present an informed, responsible and humane approach to the problems of the future. Simply put, liberal education must provide a vision, past, present, and future, that will move the person so educated to seek the fullness of his or her being. All this needs to be done with a degree of depth and in conjunction with an area of concentration that will enable each liberally educated person to support himself or herself.

Such a task, impossible as it may appear, may be accomplished by a liberal arts institution provided that the curriculum and direction exist to supply each student and faculty with what is needed. Ideally such a plan of education should include the following areas of concern:

1. strong professional programs that prepare students for fully human work;
2. some means of insuring that each person will develop the skills of communication, language, analysis, and sane, civil argumentation;
3. a systematic core of courses which bring the student and the faculty to a full awareness of the heritage of the past with a view of instilling in each person a respect for the commonality of that heritage;
4. a core of courses that confront each person with the problems of contemporary life in a world of diverse cultures, lifestyles, and values;
5. academic experiences in areas of philosophy, theology and human values that attempt to prepare the student for a future in which the enduring values of mankind have a place;
6. an experience in the process of self-evaluation and ethical choice.

The first concern, i.e., a need for strong professional programs, is predicated on the fact that the person is a being who not only reasons about the human condition but also is compelled to labor and work in the world. To neglect the fact that we produce and consume in the common material order is to neglect the material aspect of the human person. Most of us must work for a
living and this necessity compels us to responsibly address not only the requirements of the job market but also the question of how work relates to human personality and human development.  

Secondly it should be recalled that if we assume that human beings exist in a common world, we must also assume that communication, analysis, and argumentation are essential to that common life. Hence it is imperative that a liberal education expose students to what Boyer and Kaplan call the "broad range of issues raised by our common existence in a world of messages." They argue that students should have an awareness of how languages develop, of the symbols we use, of the process of receiving and interpreting messages, of breakdowns in communication, of the search for an internal language. They should strive for 'comprehensive literacy' — an ability to spot the hidden presuppositions behind an act of communication, to infer the intent and suasive designs of a message.  

The third concern of a liberal education involves overcoming the historical provincialism and the relationship this overcoming has to personal freedom. Each student needs to be "introduced to the events, individuals, ideas, texts and value systems that have contributed consequentially to human gains and losses." Appreciating the past must be a part of any liberal education and its importance involves not merely an appreciation of the past for itself but it encompasses a development of the student's appreciation of the common heritage of mankind. All the sciences and arts need this integrating component if the unity of knowledge is to be insured.

The fourth concern of liberal arts for appreciating diverse values and common problems rests on the assumption that persons as social beings have a responsibility to master the institutional and organizational structures of the contemporary world. Social beings shape and are shaped by their institutions and living in modern society means interacting with institutions. Understanding our common plight means developing institutional literacy; no educational enterprise has done its job if it has not acquainted its students with the roles, rights, and responsibilities of the principal institutions — public and private — that make up their world.  

Finally, the spiritual and ethical dimensions of the liberal arts curriculum involve an appreciation of mankind's search for value.

As a being who has values and is an entity with an ultimate value, the person must be encouraged to engage in "frank and searching discussion about the choices people make and why they make them." Such a discussion will augment, but not substitute for, the search for meaning which has defined man as a human being searching for God.

This process must be the capstone of a liberal education for it essentially deals with man as a being searching for ultimate truth. McCormick says it well:

... advance in knowledge liberates the spirit of man when it leads him out of ignorance into the possession of that truth which is the origin of every truth because it is the principle of all things and the final end of all. And this is wisdom, to set all things in order with reference to the final end of all. And here alone, in wisdom, do we find the unity of truth.
From this it is apparent that man is a natural entity endowed with a unique mind who creates an artificial, economic, social and political reality and who, in turn, usually in times of turmoil, questions these perennial issues of human existence and contemplates the ultimate purpose of it all. Man is then a being who must study science, psychology, art, economics, sociology, politics, philosophy and theology in all their variants. These are studies of the layers of sediment that constitute the rock of reality.

What, then, is the place of the humanities in this study? We can argue ad nauseam about disciplines which might be properly labeled humanities. All disciplines dealing with the various levels of human study carry on this debate in one form or another. Yet I think we can come to some understanding about what the humanities are if we reflect on the power of human beings to create values and argue that the humanities involve the workings of men and women as creators of values. The humanities are the compilation of man's commentary, whatever its form, on the human condition. Whenever we labor to give some meaning to the experiences inhering in any and all levels, we are involved in the humanities.

History, philosophy, religious studies, politics, sociology, economics, arts and letters, self-expression and questions about the value of the natural order all involve the human questioning about the moral state of Humanitas. The humanities are, then, essentially commentaries on the text of life; or to return to my metaphor of the rock of reality, humanities are the Sisyphian labor to move the rock of reality.

As all of you know, Sisyphus was condemned by the gods because, as one version relates it, he had defied fate and had tested human fidelity by ordering his wife to leave his body unburied. She obeyed and this obedience prompted Sisyphus to return to the earth to settle the score. But as Camus brilliantly portrays the myth, "when he had seen again the face of this world . . . facing the curve of the gulf, the sparkling sea and the smiles of earth . . ." he would not return to the nether world. As a consequence of affirming his allegiance to his worldliness, he was seized and assigned his labor: "The price that must be paid for the passion of this earth." 13

The humanities express man's passion for the world and they are thus imbued with the awareness of his tragic nature. That Sisyphus' love for the world was translated into his torture is not merely ironic, it is a profound example of man's human condition. Reality presses upon us and we must labor to move it from a lower to a higher plateau. And like Sisyphus, at the end of our labor "measured by skyless space and time without depth, the purpose is achieved." 14 Yet the rock falls again to the plain below and we must return to the task of moving it aright.

It is not merely the labor with reality that marks man's triumph. It is not just, as Camus says, "the cheek tight against the stone, the shoulder bracing the clay covered mass, the foot wedging it, the fresh start with arms outstretched, the wholly human security of two earth-clotted hands" 15 which marks the human effort to understand reality; indeed, it is not merely knowledge of the facts of brute matter that makes us wholly human. But it is as with Sisyphus, our consciousness of fate itself that marks our triumph and our tragedy. In the momentary glance as the rock falls again to the lowest depth there is the moment of consciousness and commentary; that "breathing space which returns as surely as his suffering." 16 With Camus, I would affirm that the return to the rock, the continual return to and labor with it, begins and ends in understanding. "When," as Camus writes it, "the images of the earth cling
too tightly to memory, when the call of happiness becomes too insistent, it
happens that melancholy rises in man's heart; this is the rock's victory, this is
the rock itself. The boundless grief is too heavy to bear. These are our nights of
Gethsemane. But crushing truths perish from being acknowledged.”17 Thus, the
acknowledgement of reality, implying as it does a knowledge of what is, is the
beginning of understanding and in that understanding is "the universe
suddenly restored to its silence” and to "myriad wondering little voices of the
earth rise up.”18

The question of how to revitalize the humanities within the liberal arts
context becomes, then, very important. They are the foundation of the entire
endeavor and, therefore, cannot be treated as addenda to the college cur-
riculum. Of late much has been written about the need to improve humanities
education. I need not belabor you with this literature. One need only look at
the Chronicle of Higher Education. I could cite the recent Directory of Interdiscip-
linary Studies in Humanities19 as evidence of the realization of the importance
of the task. One thousand ninety-seven pages of selected programs all of which
attempt in some way or another to contribute to the structure of this important
human concern.

My institution, Ohio Dominican College, is currently in the process of
constructing as an integral part of our general education requirements an
interdisciplinary program in the humanities that will provide the beginning
of the liberal arts experience. That beginning as we see it, is constituted of an
historical, philosophical, theological, literary and artistic appreciation of
those perennial issues with which all must grapple. I will be happy to share
our design with any who are so interested. But designs are endemic to each
institution and I suspect that here is not the appropriate place to discuss Ohio
Dominican’s design.

However, one point must be underscored. Approaches to humanities edu-
cation as I have already said, must begin with the premise that they are the
basis for all true education and they are not decorations on the edifice of liberal
learning. Hence, the interdisciplinary method, pervaded as it is with
shortcomings, can be a very effective way of supporting the endeavor of the
humanities by disregarding those academic walls that shut us off from our real
task. But this is yet another title for another paper.20

By way of conclusion I should like to say that the need to improve the
humanities within the liberal arts context is part of the imperative to save
civilization with which we are faced. Hence the humanities must be under-
stood as part of this endeavor for they represent man’s essential expression of
and quest for meaning. Moreover, liberal arts education can legitimately exist
only if the humanities are seen as fundamental to the whole endeavor. They
are the very fiber of the cloth of knowledge. They form the warp and woof
which weaves the complex and varied pattern that reveals the direction of our
civilization. Without a fiber of high quality the cloth will have no strength,
texture, or wearing quality and the pattern and cloth itself will disintegrate.

Yet another way to underscore the necessity of seeing the essential relation-
ship of the humanities to the liberal arts and therefore to civilization is to recall
the ancient notion of understanding as always couched in the metaphor of
sight and vision. The humanities offer us a vision of how we are and how we
can be. To lose sight of them is to become blind. To quote Ionesco, we will in
our blindness go "round in a circle in the cage of (our) planet, because (we)
have forgotten that (we) can look up to the sky . . . Because all we want is to
live, it becomes impossible for us to live. Just look around you.”
5 Maritain, Ibid., p. 10.
6 Ibid., p. 71.
7 Boyer and Kaplan, Ibid.
8 Ibid.
10 Ibid.
11 Ibid., p. 29.
14 Ibid.
15 Ibid.
16 Ibid.
17 Ibid., p. 314.
18 Ibid., p. 315.
PHILOSOPHY AS HUMANISTIC MODEL
Gary R. Sudano

Philosophy is an amorphous and sprawling subject. It is man's perpetual and always premature attempt to imitate the Creator on the Seventh Day. It attempts to put all things together when there is still an infinitude of things that are not yet known, and an infinitude of things which have not yet come to pass.¹

Ralph Barton Perry

Science and philosophy both reach "straight into experience and arrange it with new meaning."² The novice in philosophy is struck by its attempts to provide answers to the essential questions of life. Indeed, he often becomes impatient with philosophical theories which seem to backtrack and are analytic rather than speculative, and philosophy instructors are careful to balance critical activities with answer-generating activities in the classroom. In most cases the student tends to pass lightly over the former in order to get to the meat of the latter. This is the first attraction of philosophy for students, if there is any attraction at all: the search for the answers. But the value of philosophy for the humanities draws from a broader base, and it is this base which I want to examine in a few moments.

Science and philosophy — two distinct disciplines today and yet, historically, disciplines which were only superficially separated in intent or in methodology. The scientific revolution was as much a philosophical revolution in that science and philosophy were finally brought to a parting of the ways. But prior to that time, philosophy qua philosophy and science qua science could hardly be distinguished. From Thales' search for primary matter c. 600 B.C., through Empedocles (Earth, Air, Fire, and Water) and Democritus, who developed an atomistic theory of matter, the relationship between the two fields was a close one as people searched for the truths, the universals,
the glue of the universe. Many of the great philosophical figures worked intelligently and in some cases passionately as scientists; conversely, we are continually amazed to discover the tremendous knowledge of the philosophical past that scientists have had throughout history.

Even the methods of the two disciplines were indistinguishable, working as they did from perception of things, to a correlation of sense data where a coherence was established among separate entities, finally to the establishment of a symbol or a name for the new entity so that the mind could work with it in some abstract way in developing principles. The business of working with abstract entities in both disciplines was a rigorous intellectual exercise with carefully prescribed rules and procedures where hypotheses were generated and subjected to various attempts at verification. In fact, the history of both disciplines can be conceived of as essentially a history of expanding hypothesis-generating activities. But the two disciplines can be distinguished today precisely because of this activity of hypothesis generation.

In the search for essential meanings about reality, existence, nature, and the universe, philosophy appears to be losing out to science. This seems to be the case for three reasons: (a) philosophy has lost the wherewithal to discover and observe physical phenomena. Electron microscopes, nuclear accelerators, radio telescopes, and hundreds of other scientific instruments have increased perception tremendously. In one way or another, we have to “see” in order to understand things; (b) philosophy has lost the power to test theories of importance. Reason no longer supplies the method for the test since it has been discovered that some of the primary elements of nature seem to act contrary to the way reason tells us they should act; (c) philosophy has lost its hypothesis-generating power. Without scientific apparatus and scientific experimentation, no person could have hypothesized anti-matter particles, black holes, the Heisenberg uncertainty principle, and the expanding universe theory. Yet these concepts play a vital role in the way we think about our universe today.

So the student of philosophy becomes somewhat disillusioned and begins to think of the discipline as a dead one. This may or may not be the case, but it is assured that whatever is left of philosophy after science has done its work is vital to the humanities. I now want to consider briefly some of the humanistic values of philosophy and how these values may serve as a model for the humanistic enterprise.

1. Clarification: Philosophy allows us to recreate experiences through the minds of others and, thus, to clarify and find interrelationships of thought. For instance, the skeptic can worry with Descartes through his first and second meditations. The atheist and the believer alike can find ammunition for their arguments in St. Anselm and his critics. Those concerned with space and time can work from one side of the Leibniz-Clarke correspondence to the other. For issues in personal and universal morality, we can compare Nietzsche and Kant, figures separated chronologically by a little more than a hundred years, but philosophically by light-years. Then we can compare both to Marcus Aurelius. When we wonder about knowledge we can turn to theories from Plato to Moore; theories on beauty and harmony stem from Pythagoras and flow through Hospers. There is scarcely any subject ignored by the philosophers, and this great literature serves to help us clarify our own thoughts, both by serving as exemplars for our thoughts and by serving as alternatives to them. When our ideas are clarified, our values are clarified. But that is another area which I will get to shortly.
The point I want to emphasize here is the contribution of philosophy as it helps us to fill out our own thoughts about life and experience. I am reminded of another of Bronowski's essays here, and an exchange about critical appreciation between two characters in it — one an administrator and the other a literary figure. The literary figure says:

You want to hear what I say, not because it is better than what you say, but because it is different — minutely, subtly different, different in this personal foible or in that glimpse of another mind. And these differences, these small flashes of light behind the outline, they illuminate and enrich your own vision. You wanted to hear what I had to say, Sir Edward, because now that you have heard it, you will make it your own. . . . ³

Flashes of light and glimpses of other minds — this is what philosophy gives us in abundance.

2. Intellectual Tools: The methodology of philosophy is valuable in and of itself. In order to understand how this is so, we can compare it to another methodology, say that of music theory. Music theory is a kind of calculus with some primitive symbols and rules of formation. But these rules and symbols are functional only in terms of the literature from which they are derived. They have no usefulness in any other discipline; they are skeletons or systems of shorthand of certain functions in music. Even though music theorists derive a good deal of pleasure from working with these systems, they lead nowhere and are useful nowhere outside of music. The methodology of philosophy, on the other hand, is a vast valuable tool which is functional not only in terms of its literature, but also in terms of its applicability to any discipline requiring clarity of thought and argument. It is a strong calculus with room for an infinite number of terms and with a built-in exactness that is the very model for mathematics. Its syntax, rules, and nuances are difficult to become comfortable with, but it is impossible to leave studies in logic without gaining a critical awareness that is useful in one's everyday life.

3. History of Thought: The value of philosophy as a history of thought is obvious. Through it we can follow the movement of civilization and share to some extent the values and forces which molded that civilization. We can gain some insight into the human experience of our predecessors by being attentive to the virtues they praised, the vices they deplored, and the prescriptions for the good life they formulated. When we look to philosophers of the past as brothers in the life experience, we gain additional information which helps us fill out what we already know about the past from history, literature, and the arts. And this is new and important information since philosophical literature deals with thought rather than acts, logic rather than story, and conceptions rather than images. With this additional knowledge we can become aware of not only what people thought, but how they thought; not only of how they acted, but why they acted; and not only what they believed, but why they believed.

4. Value Foundations:

Oh, why is man not immortal . . . ? For what end exist brain centers and convolutions, to what end vision, speech, consciousness, genius, if all are condemned to pass into the earth, to grow cold with it, and for countless millions of years, without aim or object, to be borne with it around the sun? In order that the human frame may decay and be whirled around the sun, is it necessary to
drag man with his high, his divine mind, out of nonexistence, as if in mockery, and to turn him again into earth?\textsuperscript{4}

Any attempt to get a philosophical picture of the world is not just a matter of holding a mirror up to nature to see what is there, but it is also an attempt to account for our story-line in the world, our path through it, our mazeway.\textsuperscript{5}

Every rational adult human being tries to construct a mazeway where purposes, motives, values, and actions, as well as perceptions of what the universe really is, are fused together. We all want to put together a map of what is out there, and we all want that map to include some ideas as to who we are and what motives we should have for running the maze in the first place. We have all asked the question that Chekhov has Dr. Efimych ask in his story, and a number of answers are available.

Students on campuses today report that fundamentalist Christianity, the Carlos Castaneda movement, Scientology, and Hare Krishna all give good and powerful motivations, maps, and accountings for our actions as humans. In addition, they all can provide places of rest and even permanent homes to those who wish to use them as foundations for the life experience. Philosophy too can provide motivations, maps, and accountings for actions to those who seek "truth" and have some allegiance to the continual search, and so can science. But science does not provide the resting places and permanent homes, the foundations from which we can interpret our mazeways, that philosophy provides. Although philosophical answers to the essential questions of life are not or may not be final, we can still accept them as formulas for ways of life. We can give up the search, if we are comfortable, and cling to one set of philosophical principles which not only governs a way of life, but at the same time provides some interpretation of our universe. The range of choice among such foundations is great, and sets of principles and interpretations are available for everything from Stoicism to Existentialism, from Solipsism to Phenomenolism, from Absolutism to Empiricism.

5. Philosophy as Art: We have all been stopped dead by certain pieces of art; we all know the power of art to touch off in us a feeling that the object we are perceiving is somehow extraordinarily real, important, and true. When we examine such experiences in order to account for their unique qualities, we generally find that there are two reasons for our being struck. The first is that the artist has somehow been able to capture a chunk of subject matter that is intrinsically interesting. The scope of the object, its theme or idea is a closed and bracketed piece of the universe which is interesting to perception. The artist sets off and frames an experience for us. The second is that he has worked his materials in such a way as to fashion statements, themes, and expressions which fill out his subject matter. We marvel at his insight in choosing this or that bit of raw material, at the way he makes a particular maneuver work, at the building-block process of creation which becomes apparent to us as we dissect the work.

Philosophy has the same "stopping-power" as art, and for similar reasons. We return to a philosophical work time and again seeking an experience that is surely intellectual, but one that is also tinged with strong elements of the aesthetic. One's soul can vibrate with a philosophical work, with the form and organization of an argument, with an internal development which is predicated on movement toward intellectual clarity, and with the way it deals with a piece of bracketed existence. One responds to a content that makes sense both in relation to the task at hand and the dictates of a period or tradition.
One perceives the solid methods of step-by-step construction, and the aesthetic nature of the enterprise emerges from a perception of the careful working out of intellectual details according to the rules and techniques of the philosophical language. Irwin Edman spoke eloquently of this view of philosophy in his *Arts and the Man*.

The artist, we say and think (as he himself says and thinks), selects his facts and materials and gives them their particular order by impulse, reflectively disciplined. So, after all, does the philosopher. Seen in the long perspective of the history of thought, a world view, a metaphysics, a way of life, like a poem or a painting, is an aesthetic response and, where it attains organic unity in principle or in mood, provokes an aesthetic response. Seen without fanaticism or prejudice, it comes to be appreciated too, like a poem, or a statue, or a cathedral.6

And later:

The form of a philosophy may be less obvious or more difficult and is embodied in less immediately glamorous materials. A philosophy seems at first glance or in one's study of it to have much more to do with the disinterested plodding inquiry into truth than in the interested passion for beauty. But a philosophy, too, has its wonders of form and structure; the architecture rather than the truth of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* is its fascination for many readers. But the form of a philosophical system, like the form of a work of art, is a way of saying something, and something passionately and comprehensively important.7

6. *Philosophy as a Model for the Humanistic Enterprise*: This last contribution of philosophy is surely one of the most important to humanities educators, for we all must become philosophers about our several disciplines within the broader framework of the humanities. The various values of philosophy which I have just briefly outlined — philosophy as clarification of thought, as a provider of intellectual tools, as a history of thought, as a provider of value foundations, and as an art form — should serve as exemplars for us to use in helping our students understand the humanistic experience.

We should all look to philosophy as a model for clarification of thought, and then become clear ourselves on the way our separate disciplines within the humanities formulate and express ideas. We should all look to philosophy as a provider of strong intellectual tools, and then emulate its methodology within our own spheres of activity where one of our chief duties is to teach students to use the language of that activity with precision. We should all look to philosophy as a history of thought and then correlate the histories of our own disciplines with it in order to set up a kind of measuring stick of human intellectual and cultural development. We should all look to philosophy as a provider of value foundations and realize that our own disciplines, alone or coupled with a set of philosophical principles, can urge us through the maze. And we should all look to philosophy as an art form and understand that the artists of our disciplines also set off chunks of existence and fill them out with grand statements and carefully worked out themes.

If we thus turn to philosophy, and use it as a humanistic model, we may then better understand the total value of our work.

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5 I have borrowed this term and some of the thoughts related to it from Professor Hugh Chandler, Department of Philosophy, University of Illinois.


7 Ibid., p. 152.
Part of the reason for the woefully low level of writing skills among Americans is the scarcity of examples of literacy produced by those of us who claim to be able to think. From college catalogs and administrative memoranda to freshman themes, the quality of writing within education ranges from unintelligible to abysmal — clustering around abysmal.

I have known for many years that students in composition classes are both poorly taught and poorly motivated. I’ve forgotten every theme and almost every paper written over my own lackluster educational career as a student. Probably that’s good; they were poorly done, careless responses to thoughtless assignments. I remember those few favorable comments which came from class or teacher, but I have forgotten every scribbled negative comment, every correction, every criticism.

On the other hand, I can recall everything I’ve ever had published and that runs into hundreds of articles and thousands of reprints over a quarter of a century. I can remember, almost to specific words, every fan letter and every crank letter sent to me; and I can recreate almost every favorable (and unfavorable) comment made by phone or in person to me.

So, when the “writing crisis” hit the pedagogical fan, I was ready with an “innovative” method (so dear to the hearts of educators) for teaching writing. What had lurked in my mind for years pushed its way from subconscious to conscious — i.e., the only completely satisfying reward for good writing is publication. Students who are given a better reason for writing than the bored approval of a graduate student and/or an arbitrary grade by a young instructor marking papers and time until a section of English Lit. 5,000 opens — students with appetites whetted by the dream of publication — such students have a motivational reason for improving their writing style.
Off I went to the foundations, armed with a proposal to teach three writing workshops: (1) to college and university administrators who need it most; (2) to elementary and secondary administrators; and (3) to teachers of writing in high school and college. I found an interest within the Exxon Education Foundation which funded a one-year grant paying me as director-teacher, allowing me to give small honoraria to guest speakers (editors and editorial columnists), and permitting a tuition grant award to each of 50 students enrolled.

I selected Hamline University in St. Paul, Minnesota, as the host institution because it is five minutes from my home and, as its former president, I might expect faculty approval as a teacher in Hamline’s continuing education program.

I developed a manual for the workshops, “Opinion Writing for Publication,” a collection of 75 columns, articles and reviews I had written and published over the last five years in the local metropolitan press and nationally in Change magazine, the New York Times, Case Currents, Today’s Education, and the Community and Junior College Journal.

Success could only be achieved, I determined, by the publication of students’ opinion articles and I selected the Minneapolis Star as our goal. There were good reasons for that selection: (1) the Star has the largest circulation of any newspaper in the upper midwest; (2) the Star pays $25 for each article published on its editorial opinion page; and (3) the editorials editor of the Star is a personal friend.

Let me quickly and proudly claim success. A dozen articles were printed in the Star and another half-dozen were printed in other publications. Four of the students, that I know of, have continued to write and publish. And prior to taking the course none of the 50 students had ever been published in the mass media.

Although the Exxon grant expired a year ago I have continued offering the writing workshop: to undergraduate students last spring; to adult extension students this fall in Rochester, 75 miles from the University; as a graduate course in Educational Administration this winter on the University of Minnesota campus; and for University of Wisconsin students at a lakeside camp next summer (ten miles from my cabin retreat).

A final note of success: with only one or two exceptions every student’s writing improved, or more accurately, almost every student adjusted his style to meet the standards I set (i.e., they wrote as I write).

The Approach

Continually I reminded the students that they were writing for thousands of readers (the Star has a circulation of a quarter of a million) and that to speak to thousands one must use the vehicle of the mass media. Between all those thousands of readers and an aspiring writer stands just one person, guardian of valuable space in his publication, THE EDITOR. A steady stream of these sophisticated and cynical men and women appeared in class to advise, demand, declaim and delight. Arriving reluctantly, unsure of themselves before a group of educators, they stayed on to answer questions, drink coffee and make friends, leaving with an improved impression of the sincere interest in their profession by those who wanted to learn to write their way.

And “their way” was the standard set for the workshops. Accurate: every fact checked out, every word spelled correctly (particularly names). Concise: short (“If you can’t say it in 1,000 words or less you should be preaching or
politicking.") and never an unnecessary word, never a rhetorical question, never an “it seems to me.” Newsworthy: on a subject either new or newly approached, adding information, insight and understanding for thousands of readers whose interest must both be caught and retained. Stylistic: grammatically and structurally correct, of course, but also sprightly.

Students submitted their articles to me, the editor-in-residence, for consideration and suggested revision. Rejection never! In that way I differed from a run-of-the-mill editor. Articles were graded only after the student had been given the opportunity to rewrite, a kindness no practicing editor would consider. I read almost all articles to the class after I had made editorial alterations, seeking further suggestions and refinements from their peer editorial “board.”

A required book review of the class manual “Opinion Writing for Publication” was the final paper, a pardonable ego trip.

During each workshop I developed an opinion article from idea to editor, encouraging student involvement. I recommended subject possibilities, they selected; I suggested ways of treating the subject, they determined which was best; I wrote a rough draft, they tore it apart; I revised, they revised the revision; and, finally, a “clean” copy was submitted for publication. The $25 from its sale covered incidental expenses, particularly coffee.

Evaluation (students)

The 50 students in the three pilot workshops had these things to say about the class:

1. Visiting lecturers from editorial staffs are interesting and enjoyable but of little help in the improvement of writing ability. They seemed unwilling, or unable, to tell precisely how they do it.
2. The most effective teaching device was the working of an article, through revision and rewrite, as a class project.
3. The most helpful activity was class criticism of their own articles. Just having “my” article read to “my” classmates was deeply, personally, and sometimes painfully satisfying.
4. The most prevalent alteration in attitude toward writing which took place was a reluctant acceptance of the necessity to review and rewrite. Students quit thinking of their writing as immediately valuable and began to accept it as a developing skill. They became verbal technicians rather than the creative artisans they were inclined to consider themselves when they first enrolled in the workshop. They were able to consider writing as a craft which uses words, sentences and paragraphs to build an article, much as a mason constructs a brick or stone wall.

Evaluation (teacher)

Beyond a proud and unshakeable conviction that the method is successful, I have these comments to make:

1. Opinion writing for publication is an advanced course which best serves the needs of mature students who have both a basic ability to write and something to say. It is less successful among lower division undergraduate students. It is not a back-to-basics course.
2. Approval of a teacher of writing is given reluctantly by the educational bureaucracy to a practitioner. What seems to be an obvious qualification, the ability to write, is not so obvious among those who select teachers of writing.
The assignment is blithely dropped on an Elizabethan scholar but, too often, it is withheld from a journalist. My own faculty in communication at the University of Minnesota voted 12-3 in favor of allowing me, the dean, to teach the course to undergraduate students (I intend to find the names of those three). To teach the course for graduate credit in educational administration I must bear an appointment to "limited teaching status."

3. Obtaining editorial cooperation from the press is not easy. Newsmen are loud in their criticism of the state of writing on the campus, but sotto voce in volunteering their assistance to help alleviate the "writing crisis." They need cultivation — fortunately they are susceptible to praise of their own work, making them a fallow field before a pragmatic plow.

4. Once a student has been published he or she is hooked, a writer for life. The checks my successful students received were photographed before they were cashed, to be framed and hung on office or recreation room walls.

Thus endeth a parable of success in which a university dean, in an effort to relieve the monotony of administration, departed his opulent office to light a candle in the gloom of a national "writing crisis." Ye who are tempted to curse the darkness are encouraged to go and do likewise.

Remember
The 17th Annual Meeting
Weber State College, Ogden, Utah
October 27, 28, 29, 1977
Information: Dr. Chandadai Seshachari
The ASSOCIATION FOR GENERAL AND LIBERAL STUDIES was founded in 1961. It represents no particular doctrine or dogma other than the firm conviction that a good general education is one of the signs of liberally educated men and women. The Bylaws state that it shall "serve as a forum for professional people concerned with undergraduate general and liberal education in each of the several divisions of the curriculum."

An annual meeting, usually held in the month of October, is devoted to a program which engages in philosophical reflection on the function and purpose of general and liberal education and to the exchange of innovative ideas for successful instruction. Further information concerning existing programs of general education is periodically disseminated in a newsletter.

AGLS has established a close relationship with the American Association for Higher Education. As a consequence of this relationship, the ASSOCIATION FOR GENERAL AND LIBERAL STUDIES co-sponsors a discussion session at the Annual National Conference on Higher Education held in Chicago each March by AAHE.

Membership in AGLS is open to individuals and also to institutions. Annual dues for regular membership are ten dollars ($10.00). Graduate students may become members of AGLS at a special rate of six dollars ($6.00) per year. An institutional membership of twenty-five dollars ($25.00) entitles the institution to one individual representative without additional fee. The membership year coincides with the academic year, beginning September 1.

Included in the payment of the annual dues are subscriptions to two publications devoted to the concerns of general and liberal education.

1. INTERDISCIPLINARY PERSPECTIVES, a publication on issues of interest to liberal and general education published by the College of Basic Studies, Boston University.

2. THE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE QUARTERLY, A Magazine of General Education, published by the University College, Michigan State University.

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