

Qualities of an Educated Person Project:

Qualities Important to the LAC

Early Chronology – The Qualities of an Educated Person Project

- October 1995: “The Future of Teaching and Learning at UNI”, conference organized through the Center for the Enhancement of Teaching – led to breakout session on qualities desired in a UNI graduate
- Late 1995: Invitation to faculty to participate in continued discussions
- January – July 1996: Friday afternoon conversations
- July 1996: Working draft summarizing group conversations
- http://www.uni.edu/teachctr/cet_activities/qep_report.pdf

Qualities of an Educated Person

Project – Discussion Group

- William Ausmus, Communication Studies
- Scott Cawelti, English Language and Literature
- Kamyar Enshayan, Physics
- Joel Haack, Mathematics
- Susan Koch, HPELS
- Jay Lees, History
- Tony McAdams, Management
- Carmen Montecinos, Ed Psych and Foundations
- Roger Sell, Curriculum and Instruction (Facilitator)
- Ira Simet, Chemistry (co-chair)
- Jerry Soneson, Philosophy and Religion (co-chair)
- Anne Woodrick, Sociology and Anthropology
- Jack Yates, Psychology

Five Stage Process for Change

1. Describe, with justification, the qualities of an educated person.
2. Analyze current practices at UNI encouraging or inhibiting development of those qualities.
3. Suggest reforms.
4. Plan curricular and co-curricular changes.
5. Reallocate resources.

QEP group: #1, some #2, and preliminary suggestions for #3.

The Ends of Undergraduate Education

- Most Important and Comprehensive Purpose:
- “to prepare a student to live a more thoughtful, free and responsible life in an increasingly diverse, complex and changing world than would otherwise be the case.”

More Specific Purposes

- 1. to improve understanding
- 2. to promote freedom
- 3. to enhance responsibility

Areas of Study

- 1. Study of the Self
 - A. intellectual development
 - B. identity
 - C. emotional development
 - D. value development

Areas of Study

- 2. Study of community life, of selves in relation to other selves
 - A. employment
 - B. appreciation of the interdependence of persons in community
 - C. appropriation of inherited modes of communication (the contribution which others have made to our communities)
 - D. responsibility in community

Areas of Study

- 3. Study of the World, of communities in relation to each other and to nature
 - A. appreciation and understanding of other cultures
 - B. understanding of the connections that constitute nature
 - C. responsibility to and within the whole

Knowledge

- To know something is, at the very least, to understand how that thing is (actually or potentially) connected to other things, and therefore what one can expect from it.
- For example, a child learning the nature of a ball or a dog – patterns of interaction

Knowledge and Inquiry

- 1. Knowledge is the **product** of inquiry into patterns of connections
- 2. Inquiry is the **process or method** by which one learns about new patterns of connectedness, by which established knowledge is modified and expanded
- “Knowledge” is a quality of an educated person in the sense that that person has learned how to engage in the dynamic between established knowledge and critical inquiry

Conditions for developing knowledge

- 1. exposure to multiple traditions of discourse having to do with knowledge
 - LAC:
 - A. expose multiple discourses of various disciplines
 - B. encourage to think about connections that might obtain among the many bodies of knowledge – so enlarge picture of the world
 - C. learn how to analyze and synthesize larger patterns

Conditions for developing knowledge

- 2. opportunity and encouragement to cultivate wisdom
- Premise: Knowledge apart from wisdom can be dangerous: Frankenstein
 - LAC
- Proposal: aim to integrate knowledge, emotion, and practical experience, leading to a comprehensive philosophical perspective on the world, capable to guiding conduct in meaningful and responsible ways.

LAC Conditions for Wisdom

- 1. opportunity to apply knowledge to concrete living, such as in field or service education
- 2. opportunity to take risks – intellectual and professional – learning to think about the consequences
- 3. opportunity to think about important social and moral issues – learning to reason ethically
- 4. opportunity to think about the limitation of their own wisdom – encouraging self-understanding in our global culture

Implications for the LAC

- 1. move away from “introduction to a discipline” courses, while promoting interdisciplinary courses where a central part of the course would be working on integrated patterns of understanding
- 2. demand work on intellectual skills in most classes to promote creativity and critical reflection for wisdom
- 3. promote and reward those who excel in the teaching of LAC courses – since this is the most difficult kind of teaching, working on skills and intellectual integration
- 4. make LAC the CORE of education, 4 years long

Values in Higher Education

- Noun form: an object (or goal) that we prize and treasure, such as “honesty” or “an honest person”
- Verb form: the subjective feeling of like or dislike, prizing or despising, toward an object (or goal), as in “I like (value) honesty”

Values we value in our best students

- 1. they value knowledge, intellectual inquiry that leads to deeper understanding of self, community, and world
 - A. they find of intrinsic value, are moved by, many different subjects (wide interests)
 - B. intellectual growth, valuing intellectual adventure
 - C. intellectual creativity, ability to play with ideas, trying out various possibilities
 - D. intellectual empathy, entering imaginatively into subjects and perspectives of others

Values we value in our best students

- 2. they value wisdom
 - A. integration of knowledge, emotion, and action
 - B. willingness to hold as tentative one's most fundamental intellectual and value assumptions about the world
 - C. willingness to deal with ambiguity and uncertainty
 - D. while acknowledging conflicting values, willingness to make reflective and responsible decisions

Values we value in our best students

- 3. they value responsibility, both personal and public
 - A. critical reflection on personal and social values: clarification, evaluation, and development
 - B. discussion of value issues with others
 - C. second-order value reflection, philosophical reflection on the nature and role of values in human life

Implications for the LAC

- 1. our aim is not to “teach” values, as though values constitute a kind of knowledge, but we can do two things: (a) model the very best values, and (b) design our LAC courses to nurture these ideal values with reflection
- 2. like writing, value cultivation and reflection cannot be learned in one course but should run throughout the LAC
- 3. a freshman course, focusing especially on a significant social or moral problem
- 4. LAC teachers clarify value assumptions of their own teaching and course material

Intellectual Skills in Higher Education

- Not merely actions or techniques
 - “knowing what to do”
 - often repetitive and mechanical
- Combinations of ability and application
 - “knowing how and when to act”
 - features judgment and choice

Five Categories of Intellectual Skills

1. Core communication skills – least field-specific

- * Reading
- * Writing
- * Listening
- * Speaking

2. Essential skills – potentially field-specific

- * Quantitative skills
- * Information/inquiry skills (research techniques, media use)
- * Language/computer skills
- * Visual skills (image interpretation, map reading)

Five Categories of Intellectual Skills

3. Thinking skills – build on core and essential skills

- * Analysis and evaluation

- * Synthesis

- * Decision-making

4. Field-specific skills

- * Music performance or art, for example

5. Interpersonal skills

- * Participation/team skills


- * Productive disagreement

- * Citizenship

- * Mentoring

Implications for the LAC

- 1. Encourage development of core skills across the curriculum
 - Not the responsibility of single departments
 - Infused throughout curriculum, not front-loaded
- 2. Provide opportunities for practice of thinking skills
- 3. Expose students to field-specific knowledge and skills
 - Not solely in their chosen disciplines
 - Avoid overemphasis (“ticket-punching”)



Project Group on the Qualities of an Educated Person
Report on Project Group Discussion
Working Draft, July 1996

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