

Liberal Education, General Education: The New Design Principles and High Impact Practices

Greater Expectations Institute
Nashville, TN
June 17, 2009

Carol Geary Schneider

Part 1 Mapping Essential Learning Outcomes Across the Curriculum

Part 2 Mapping High Impact Practices Across the Curriculum

Part 3 Applications to General Education

Part 4 Applications to the Major



*Association
of American
Colleges and
Universities*

The Essential Learning Outcomes



Beginning in school, and continuing at successively higher levels across their college studies, students should prepare for twenty-first-century challenges by gaining:

★ Knowledge of Human Cultures and the Physical and Natural World

- Through study in the sciences and mathematics, social sciences, humanities, histories, languages, and the arts

Focused by engagement with big questions, both contemporary and enduring

★ Intellectual and Practical Skills, including

- Inquiry and analysis
- Critical and creative thinking
- Written and oral communication
- Quantitative literacy
- Information literacy
- Teamwork and problem solving

Practiced extensively, across the curriculum, in the context of progressively more challenging problems, projects, and standards for performance

★ Personal and Social Responsibility, including

- Civic knowledge and engagement—local and global
- Intercultural knowledge and competence
- Ethical reasoning and action
- Foundations and skills for lifelong learning

Anchored through active involvement with diverse communities and real-world challenges

★ Integrative and Applied Learning, including

- Synthesis and advanced accomplishment across general and specialized studies

Demonstrated through the application of knowledge, skills, and responsibilities to new settings and complex problems

Note: This listing was developed through a multiyear dialogue with hundreds of colleges and universities about needed goals for student learning; analysis of a long series of recommendations and reports from the business community; and analysis of the accreditation requirements for engineering, business, nursing, and teacher education. The findings are documented in previous publications of the Association of American Colleges and Universities: *Greater Expectations: A New Vision for Learning as a Nation Goes to College* (2002), *Taking Responsibility for the Quality of the Baccalaureate Degree* (2004), and *Liberal Education Outcomes: A Preliminary Report on Achievement in College* (2005). *Liberal Education Outcomes* is available online at www.aacu.org/leap.

FOSTERING ESSENTIAL LEARNING OUTCOMES – *ACROSS THE CURRICULUM AND CO-CURRICULUM*

First Year Experience

Focused Studies
Major/Minor(s)

Advanced Integrative and Culminating
Work—in General and Specialized Studies

Analytic, Contextual and Holistic Thinking

e.g. argument;
quantitative reasoning;
diverse viewpoints;
problem-solving;
research, etc.

Effective Communication Using Multiple Literacies and Forms of Expression

e.g., writing, speaking;
multi-media;
technologies;
cross-cultural dialogue,
etc.

Critical Reflection/ Informed Action as Citizens, Producers, Human Beings

e.g., analyze social, civic and
equity issues;
one's own role;
role of competing values;
cross-cultural and
historical perspectives,
etc.

Ethical Action for Local and Global Communities

e.g., one's own values and
bases for choice;
values questions in
chosen field;
group decision making;
role of civic values in
diverse democracy;

Integrative Learning

e.g., connections across
courses and disciplines;
connections between
liberal arts
and professional fields;
experiential and academic
learning;
advanced integrative
projects and culminating
work.

High-Impact Educational Practices



These widely tested teaching and learning innovations show substantial educational benefits, especially for college students from historically underserved backgrounds. But these practices remain optional rather than expected on most campuses

1 First-Year Seminars and Experiences

Many schools now build into the curriculum first-year seminars or other programs that bring small groups of students together with faculty or staff on a regular basis. The highest-quality first-year experiences place a strong emphasis on critical inquiry, frequent writing, information literacy, collaborative learning, and other skills that develop students' intellectual and practical competencies. First-year seminars can also involve students with cutting-edge questions in scholarship and with faculty members' own research.

2 Common Intellectual Experiences

The older idea of a "core" curriculum has evolved into a variety of modern forms, such as a set of required common courses or a vertically organized general education program that includes advanced integrative studies and/or required participation in a learning community (see below). These programs often combine broad themes—e.g., technology and society, global interdependence—with a variety of curricular and cocurricular options for students.

3 Learning Communities

The key goals for learning communities are to encourage integration of learning across courses and to involve students with "big questions" that matter beyond the classroom. Students take two or more linked courses as a group and work closely with one another and with their professors. Many learning communities explore a common topic and/or common readings through the lenses of different disciplines. Some deliberately link "liberal arts" and "professional courses"; others feature service learning.

4 Writing-Intensive Courses

These courses emphasize writing at all levels of instruction and across the curriculum, including final-year projects. Students are encouraged to produce and revise various forms of writing for different audiences in different disciplines. The effectiveness of this repeated practice "across the curriculum" has led to parallel efforts in such areas as quantitative reasoning, oral communication, information literacy, and, on some campuses, ethical inquiry.

5 Collaborative Assignments and Projects

Collaborative learning combines two key goals: learning to work and solve problems in the company of others, and sharpening one's own understanding by listening seriously to the insights of others, especially those with different backgrounds and life experiences. Approaches range from study groups within a course, to team-based assignments and writing, to cooperative projects and research.

6 Undergraduate Research

Many colleges and universities are now providing research experiences for students in all disciplines. Undergraduate research, however, has been most prominently used in science disciplines. With strong support from the National Science Foundation and the research community, scientists are reshaping their courses to connect key concepts and questions with students' early and active involvement in systematic investigation and research. The goal is to involve students with actively contested questions, empirical observation, cutting-edge technologies, and the sense of excitement that comes from working to answer important questions.

7 Diversity/Global Learning

Many colleges and universities now emphasize courses and programs that help students explore cultures, life experiences, and worldviews different from their own. These studies—which may address U.S. diversity, world cultures, or both—often explore "difficult differences" such as racial, ethnic, and gender inequality, or continuing struggles around the globe for human rights, freedom, and power. Frequently, intercultural studies are augmented by experiential learning in the community and/or by study abroad.

8 Service Learning, Community-Based Learning

In these programs, field-based "experiential learning" with community partners is an instructional strategy—and often a required part of the course. The idea is to give students direct experience with issues they are studying in the curriculum and with ongoing efforts to analyze and solve problems in the community. A key element in these programs is the opportunity students have to both *apply* what they are learning in real-world settings and *reflect* in a classroom setting on their service experiences. These programs model the idea that giving something back to the community is an important college outcome, and that working with community partners is good preparation for citizenship, work, and life.

9 Internships

Internships are another increasingly common form of experiential learning. The idea is to provide students with direct experience in a work setting—usually related to their career interests—and to give them the benefit of supervision and coaching from professionals in the field. If the internship is taken for course credit, students complete a project or paper that is approved by a faculty member.

10 Capstone Courses and Projects

Whether they're called "senior capstones" or some other name, these culminating experiences require students nearing the end of their college years to create a project of some sort that integrates and applies what they've learned. The project might be a research paper, a performance, a portfolio of "best work," or an exhibit of artwork. Capstones are offered both in departmental programs and, increasingly, in general education as well.

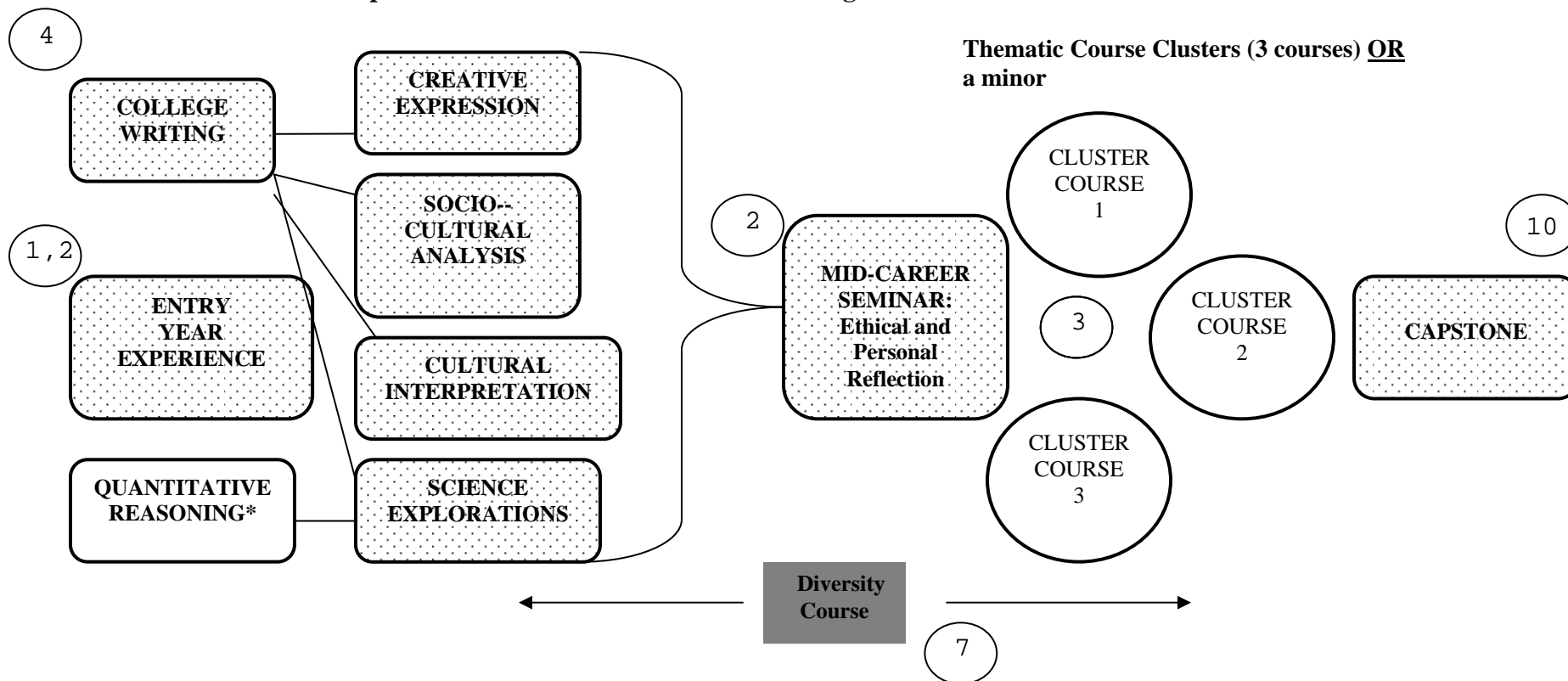


The USM Core Curriculum at the University of Southern Maine


PROGRESS TOWARD BACHELOR'S DEGREE



Development of Intellectual Skills and Knowledge



Total Credit Hours: min. of 37; 39 if students complete 4-credit College Writing and Quantitative Reasoning courses.

 Writing intensive

*Quantitative Reasoning must be completed before taking Science Explorations

College Writing must be completed before Creative Expression, Socio-cultural Analysis, Cultural Interpretation and Science Explorations.

Students must complete 3 of the 4 second-tier courses before taking the Mid-Career Seminar

Liberal and Liberal Arts Education: A Guide to Frequently Confused Terms

LIBERAL EDUCATION*: An approach to college learning that empowers individuals and prepares them to deal with complexity, diversity and change. It emphasizes broad knowledge of the wider world (e.g science, culture and society) as well as in-depth achievement in a specific field of interest. It helps students develop a sense of social responsibility as well as strong intellectual and practical skills that span all major fields of study, such as communication, analytical and problem-solving skills, and includes a demonstrated ability to apply knowledge and skills in real-world settings.

LIBERAL ARTS: Specific disciplines (e.g., the humanities, sciences, and social sciences)

LIBERAL ARTS COLLEGE: A particular institutional type – often small, often residential – that facilitates close interaction between faculty and students, while grounding its curriculum in the liberal arts disciplines.

ARTES LIBERALES: Historically, the basis for the modern liberal arts: the trivium (grammar, logic and rhetoric) and the quadrivium (arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music).

GENERAL EDUCATION: The part of a liberal education curriculum shared by all students. It provides broad exposure to multiple disciplines and forms the basis for developing important intellectual, civic and practical capacities. General education can take many forms, and increasingly includes introductory, advanced, and integrative forms of learning.

Adapted from: Greater Expectations: A New Vision for Learning as a National Goes to College (Association of American Colleges & Universities, 2002)

*76% of employers would recommend this kind of program to college-bound students. These findings are taken from a survey of employers commissioned by AAC&U and conducted by Peter A. Hart Associates in November and December 2007. For a full report on the survey and its complete findings, see www.aacu.org/leap

ANONYMOUS COLLEGE DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
(major requirement – 36 credit hours)

All students are required to maintain a history portfolio. Each portfolio will include three items from the 100-200 level, three from the 300-400 level, and the required senior research paper. This ensures that all students develop essential historical skills, whatever sequence of courses they take.

Course Sequence	Portfolio Requirements
<p><i>100 Level</i> World History U.S. History to 1865 Western Civilization to 1660</p>	<p>Historical Essay Documentary Analysis Abstract of document or article</p>
<p><i>200 level</i> U.S. History since 1865 – or Western Civilization since 1660 or a 200-Level Elective Global Field Survey-Level Course (e.g., African history) Historical Methods and Materials</p>	<p>Documentary analysis using multiple genres of source materials Numerical Analysis (Assessment of data, charts, and tables) Graphic Analysis (Assessment of artifacts, maps, and blueprints)</p>
<p><i>300 Level</i> Proseminar in Historical Research Global Field Upper-Level Course Free Elective</p>	<p>Historical Abstract of a Journal Article Research Proposal Library/Online Research Exercises Bibliographic Essays/Literature Review Scholarly Book Review Peer Evaluation</p>
<p><i>400 Level</i> Free Elective Free Elective Capstone Seminar</p>	<p>Historical Fiction Periodic and Literature Review Video Research paper in field related to history Capstone Seminar Research Paper (Required)</p>

Source: *Handbook of the Undergraduate Curriculum: A Comprehensive Guide to Purposes, Structures, Practices, and Change*, Jerry G. Gaff, James L. Ratcliff and associates (AAC&U, 1996)