December 1999
Utah Regents Task Force on General Education

Background

The goals below represent the consensus of various Utah faculty work groups and also of focus groups at the 10/98 regional conference in Park City on A What Is an Educated Person? Utah general education requirements include writing, quantitative literacy, physical sciences, life sciences, social sciences, humanities, fine arts, and American institutions. So groups were asked to develop consenses about general education goals overall and in each of these areas.

Overall

An educated person should be able to exercise the following skills:

1. Use technology to access, process, and deliver information.
2. Analyze and critically evaluate information sources.
3. Use quantitative data, for instance formulas, graphs, and tables.
4. Formulate and present a logical argument.
5. Communicate clearly and cogently in writing, orally, and in symbols.
6. Derive meaning by:
   1) referring to what is explicitly expressed; 2) reasoning to determine implicit meanings; 3) drawing conclusions, comparisons, and generalizations beyond a given topic.
7. Apply the scientific method.
8. Assess the credibility of scientific information.
9. Think in international and historical contexts.
10. Assess one's own personal efforts.
11. Understand essential principles, concepts and appropriate terminology of the liberal arts and sciences.
12. Work in groups as well as individually, using intellectual tools to assess and improve groups effectiveness.
13. Be a lifelong learner.

An educated person should also possess the following awarenesses:

1. Comprehend and value intellectual processes that produce knowledge.
2. Draw connections among disciplines, among wide areas of general education, and between personal experience and academic knowledge.
3. Analyze interplays between individuals, groups, social and economic systems, and ecological systems.
4. Integrate intellectual, ethical, and aesthetic considerations across multiple contexts.
5. Recognize common human needs and aspirations.
6. Appreciate the historical development and cumulative nature of knowledge.
7. Understand and accept the social and ethical responsibilities of citizenship.
8. Comprehend the value of basic and applied research.

Writing

The competencies below are expected of all students completing an associate degree or its equivalent in general education. Teaching toward these competencies is the responsibility not only of English Departments

or Writing Programs, but of all disciplines. Students are expected to increase their capabilities in all areas listed elsewhere as expectations for competency at the end of secondary schooling, and to develop new skills in the following areas:

A person educated in writing should be able to:

1. Adapt their writing for different purposes, audiences, and composing situations.
2. Identify the characteristics of and accommodate their writing to a variety of rhetorical situations by selecting and using the most appropriate genres.
3. Understand that writing is a social act to be judged on the basis of its effectiveness in achieving its purposes in regard to its intended audiences.
4. Use a variety of formal and informal kinds of writing.
5. Demonstrate a working mastery of the most common academic genres, including the informative report, the forensic essay, and the research paper.
6. Demonstrate a working familiarity with a variety of additional genres, including journals, diaries, learning logs, essay exams, electronic mail, and multimedia presentations.
7. Work in groups to produce texts as well as to work individually.
8. Follow writing process steps to produce various kinds of writing for a variety of writing contexts.
9. Write for various disciplines.
10. Use formats, organizational patterns, evidence for support, vocabulary and styles specific to the disciplines in which they are writing.
11. Demonstrate critical and analytical thinking in their writing.
12. Produce coherent and logically sound documents.
13. Produce cohesively written arguments supported by appropriate evidence.
14. Use the syntax and mechanics of edited American English appropriately.

Quantitative Literacy

The achievement of quantitative literacy in a college graduate should be viewed as a process that spans the undergraduate experience. It is not something that someone can get out of the way in high school.

A person quantitatively literate should be able to:

1. Interpret mathematical models such as formulas, graphs, tables, and schematics, and draw inferences from them.
2. Represent mathematical information symbolically, visually, numerically, and verbally.
3. Use arithmetical, algebraic, geometric and statistical methods to solve problems.
4. Estimate and check answers to mathematical problems in order to determine reasonableness, identify alternatives, and select optimal results.
5. Recognize that mathematical and statistical methods have limits.
6. [Optional] Understand basic concepts describing time-varying systems, and how prediction follows from the formulation of basic laws of change, both analytically and numerically.

Physical Sciences

A student who has completed physical science general education should be able to:

1. Use the concepts of physical science to solve daily problems.
2. Understand how physical scientists think and form judgements about the physical world.
3. Assess the credibility of scientific information.

4. Recognize the manifestations of physical science in phenomena of the everyday world.
5. Find ongoing value and pleasure in physical science's role in life.
6. Acquire the tools necessary for life-long learning in physical science.

Life Sciences

A person educated in biology courses should be able to:

1. Understand, values and uses science as a process of obtaining knowledge based upon observable evidence.
2. Understand that human beings are living organisms dependent for survival and quality of life on the biological and physical natural world.
3. Appreciates the historical development and cumulative nature of science.
4. Understand the relationships and differences between science and technology.
5. Recognize science as an achievement of human civilization that enables us to understand and appreciate the natural world.
6. Distinguish between science and pseudoscience.
7. Understand and accepts the social and ethical responsibilities of scientific knowledge.
8. Understand essential principles, concepts and appropriate terminology of science.

A person educated in the life sciences should have an understanding of these essential concepts:

1. Principles and applications of the scientific method.
2. The chemical and physical nature of life and the applicability of physical laws.
3. The patterns and processes of evolution and the resulting diversity of life.
4. The inheritance and continuity of life (genetics and reproduction).
5. Structure, function, and development at the molecular, cellular, and organismal levels.
6. The interactions of organisms with each other and with their environment.
7. The consequences of interactions between humans and the biosphere.

Humanities

A person educated in the Humanities should be able to:

1. Read and interpret a variety of humanities texts.
2. Recognize relationships among humanities disciplines.
3. Design and execute humanities research.
4. Formulate and defend a humanities thesis in writing.
5. Write a coherent, persuasive, and well-reasoned humanities essay.
6. Integrate ethical, cultural and historical considerations in the humanities.
7. Relate another's humanity to one's own.

Fine Arts

The person educated in the fine arts should be able to:

1. Understand the connections between the arts and society, and is able to articulate those connections.
2. Understand the artistic process, and the elements and forms of artistic endeavors.

3. Demonstrate knowledge of specific composers and artists, their work, and the style periods and historical context of their creative work.
4. Find opportunities to develop levels of knowledge through participation as well as through academic experiences and as a consumer of the arts.
5. Demonstrate the ability to self-assess personal efforts in the arts.
6. Demonstrate an open mindedness to developing art forms.
7. Seek continuous opportunities to experience the arts as an integral part of life.

Social Sciences

A person educated in the social sciences should have the overall qualities:

1. Is an informed, productive citizen
2. Exhibits intellectual integrity
3. Exercises critical thinking
4. Exhibits and assesses self-awareness/insight
5. Applies skills for problem-solving
6. Suspends judgement until sees evidence
7. Appreciates diversity
8. Appropriately generalizes from the particular and can defend the generalization
9. Can apply theory to practice and vice-versa
10. Is a lifelong learner

A person educated in the social sciences - specifically, gen ed social sciences requirements - should have an understanding of:

1. Plato’s belief with good reason, not certainty
2. Differences and similarities between people and between groups
3. Competing paradigms
4. The possibility that the same body of data may provide support for more than one theory
5. Particular life skills: collaboration, persuasiveness, effectiveness in groups for both the group and oneself
6. How to gather and evaluate different kinds of social data
7. Non-rational as well as rational aspects of how others and we act
8. Social, behavioral, economic, spatial, and historical perspectives
9. Social foundations of knowledge
10. Probabilistic rather than deterministic thinking
11. Relations between social theory, research, and practice
12. Social consequences of one’s choices
13. Roles of technology in society
14. Interplays between individuals, groups, and social systems
15. Basic social and behavioral concepts

A person educated in the social and behavioral sciences should be able to:

1. Write clearly and cogently about the social sciences
2. Analyze and critically evaluate their literatures
3. Collect and interpret data

4. Use technology to access, process, and deliver information about them
5. Analyze phenomena using concepts from them