



Basic concepts in general education essential to adjustment in business administration for undergraduate students
by Louis William Veraldi

A thesis submitted to the Graduate Faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education
Montana State University
© Copyright by Louis William Veraldi (1969)

Abstract:

This study developed from the belief that there was a need to examine general education in the business curriculum to determine what competencies, abilities and understandings are essential for the student graduating in business. Two procedures were used: (1) a review of literature in business curriculum and general education, and (2) a survey of business graduates and employers of business graduates to determine their opinions as to effectiveness of present curriculum and to obtain their recommendations for improvement of curriculum.

The samples were chosen from 138 employers of business graduates and 189 business graduates from Montana State University and Eastern Montana College for the years 1963 through 1968 to determine their opinions of college training and need for curriculum improvement. Of the 138 employers, data were gathered from 96, and of the 189 college graduates, data were gathered from 93.

The review of literature pointed out the need for curriculum revision and also revealed contemporary issues which have implication for curriculum planning. These issues are: (1) the rapid increase in knowledge in all fields, (2) the rapid obsolescence of knowledge making it necessary to educate people to cope with change, (3) the growing need for social responsibility by business management and the concept that a community is not merely a place to which business looks for profits but is a place to which it owes obligations in areas such as environmental pollution control and taxation, and (4) the increasing international scope of business which creates a whole new set of problems such as a need for international law, international patent system, and concern for conditions in countries in which investments are made.

A major conclusion based on the recommendations from the open-end questions included in the questionnaires is that there is need for an increase in general education requirements in business training especially in the areas of oral and written communication, courses dealing with human relations, courses in logic, mathematics, and problem solving. A second conclusion is that there is a need for a business curriculum that is relevant to business practices. Business programs need to be revised to include greater involvement by both teachers and students with the business community.

BASIC CONCEPTS IN GENERAL EDUCATION ESSENTIAL
TO ADJUSTMENT IN BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION
FOR UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

by

Louis William Veraldi


A thesis submitted to the Graduate Faculty in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

of

Doctor of Education

Approved:


Head, Major Department


Chairman, Examining Committee


Dean, Graduate Division

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY
Bozeman, Montana

June, 1969

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The writer wishes to thank the many people who gave assistance and cooperated in the preparation of this dissertation. He is grateful for the help he received from businessmen and the group of Montana State University and Eastern Montana College graduates who completed questionnaires. He is also appreciative of the assistance from the alumni offices of Montana State University and Eastern Montana College who allowed the investigator to use the card files of graduates.

He would like to especially thank the following for their encouragement, guidance and assistance: Dr. Milford Franks, adviser to the writer, Dr. Robert J. Thibeault, Dr. Harvey Larson, Dr. Helmer Holje, and Dr. Harry Hausser.

L. W. V.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION	1
Statement of the Problem	8
Procedures	9
Delimitations	11
Definition of Terms	11
II. NATURE OF GENERAL EDUCATION FOR THE UNDER- GRADUATE COLLEGE STUDENT	13
General Education Defined	15
History of General Education in the United States	17
Present Trends in General Education	28
Summary	35
III. BRIEF HISTORY OF HIGHER EDUCATION FOR BUSI- NESS IN THE UNITED STATES	38
General Education and Business Training	44
Comparison of General Education Requirements in Colleges and Universities Selected Throughout the United States	46
Summary	53
IV. CONSTRUCTION AND ADMINISTRATION OF QUES- TIONNAIRE	55
Construction of Questionnaire	56
Directions for Answering the Questionnaires	57
Administration of the Questionnaires	59
Responses to Questionnaires	63

Chapter	Page
V. RATINGS OF BUSINESS GRADUATES BY EMPLOYERS AND GRADUATES	63
Procedures Used in Treating the Questionnaire Returns . .	64
Compilation of Ratings in Questionnaire	65
Summary	125
VI. EMPLOYERS' CHARACTERIZATIONS OF ADAPTA- TIONS OF THE BUSINESS GRADUATES TO THEIR EMPLOYMENT	135
Employers' Appraisal of Strengths of College Business Graduates	135
Employers' Appraisal of Weaknesses of College Trained Personnel	145
Employers' Recommendations for Curriculum Changes in College Business Training	155
Summary	166
VII. GRADUATES' RESPONSES TO OPEN-END QUESTIONS ON STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF COLLEGE TRAINING AND SUGGESTED CURRICULUM IM- PROVEMENTS	169
Graduates' Appraisal of Adequacy of College Training for Employment Needs as Revealed by Open-End Questions	170
Summary	191
VIII. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS. .	195
Summary	196
Conclusions	199
Recommendations	200

Chapter	Page
APPENDIX	202
Appendix A: Excerpts from an Article by Daniel Bell Entitled, "The Scholar Cornered," <u>The American Scholar</u> , XXXVII (Summer, 1968), pp. 401-6	203
Appendix B: Catalogs Used to Make a Comparison of General Education Requirements Among Forty Colleges and Universities	207
Appendix C: Copies of Letters and Questionnaires Sent to Employers and Graduates, and Names of Employers Responding	212
Appendix D: Computation of <u>t-score</u> Values of Mean Ratings for the Four Groups in the Measured Competencies	232
LITERATURE CONSULTED	239

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Suggested Minimum General Education Program for Undergraduate Business Students	43
2. Suggested Undergraduate Curriculum	45
3. Required Courses Outside Business and Economics	47
4. Comparison of General Education Requirements in Ten Schools Located in the Various Western States . . .	49
5. Comparison of General Education Requirements in Ten Schools Located in the Midwestern States	50
6. Comparison of General Education Requirements in Ten Schools Located in the Southern States	51
7. Comparison of General Education Requirements in Ten Schools Located in the Eastern States	52
8. Number of Employers and Graduates Contacted and Number Responding to Questionnaire	63
9. Mean Ratings of Employers and Graduates on Competencies of Business Graduates in Oral Communication	69
10. Ratings of Employers and Graduates by Percentages on Competencies of Business Graduates in Oral Communication	70
11. Mean Ratings of Employers and Graduates on Competencies of Business Graduates in Written Communication	77

Table	Page
12. Ratings of Employers and Graduates by Percentages on Competencies of Business Graduates in Written Communication	78
13. Mean Ratings of Employers and Graduates on Competence of Business Graduates in Finding Information	82
14. Ratings of Employers and Graduates by Percentages of Competence of Business Graduates in Finding Information	83
15. Mean Ratings of Employers and Graduates on Competence of Business Graduates in Solving Problems	87
16. Ratings of Employers and Graduates by Percentages of Competence of Business Graduates in Solving Problems	89
17. Mean Ratings of Employers and Graduates on Ability of Business Graduates to Think Creatively	95
18. Ratings of Employers and Graduates by Percentages On Ability of Business Graduates to Think Creatively	96
19. Mean Ratings of Employers and Graduates on the Ability of Business Graduates to Understand People	100
20. Ratings of Employers and Graduates by Percentages of Business Graduates in Understanding of People	101
21. Mean Ratings of Employers and Graduates of Business Graduates' Understanding of Society	104
22. Ratings of Employers and Graduates by Percentages of the Business Graduates' Understanding of Society	106

Table	Page
23. Mean Ratings of Employers and Graduates on Business Graduates' Ability to Understand Societies Other than Our Own	109
24. Ratings of Employers and Graduates on Business Graduates' Ability to Understand Societies Other than Our Own	111
25. Mean Ratings of Employers and Graduates of Business Graduates' Understanding of Physical Environment . .	114
26. Ratings of Employers and Graduates of Business Graduates' Understanding of Physical Environment . .	115
27. Mean Ratings by Employers and Graduates of Business Graduates' Appreciation of the Arts	119
28. Ratings of Employers and Graduates of Business Graduates' Appreciation of the Arts	120
29. Mean Ratings of Employers and Graduates of Business Graduates Satisfying Personal Philosophy	125
30. Ratings of Employers and Graduates of Business Graduates' Satisfying Personal Philosophy	130
31. Computation of <u>t-score</u> Values of Mean Ratings for the Four Groups in the Measured Competencies	235

ABSTRACT

This study developed from the belief that there was a need to examine general education in the business curriculum to determine what competencies, abilities and understandings are essential for the student graduating in business. Two procedures were used: (1) a review of literature in business curriculum and general education, and (2) a survey of business graduates and employers of business graduates to determine their opinions as to effectiveness of present curriculum and to obtain their recommendations for improvement of curriculum.

The samples were chosen from 138 employers of business graduates and 189 business graduates from Montana State University and Eastern Montana College for the years 1963 through 1968 to determine their opinions of college training and need for curriculum improvement. Of the 138 employers, data were gathered from 96, and of the 189 college graduates, data were gathered from 93.

The review of literature pointed out the need for curriculum revision and also revealed contemporary issues which have implication for curriculum planning. These issues are: (1) the rapid increase in knowledge in all fields, (2) the rapid obsolescence of knowledge making it necessary to educate people to cope with change, (3) the growing need for social responsibility by business management and the concept that a community is not merely a place to which business looks for profits but is a place to which it owes obligations in areas such as environmental pollution control and taxation, and (4) the increasing international scope of business which creates a whole new set of problems such as a need for international law, international patent system, and concern for conditions in countries in which investments are made.

A major conclusion based on the recommendations from the open-end questions included in the questionnaires is that there is need for an increase in general education requirements in business training especially in the areas of oral and written communication, courses dealing with human relations, courses in logic, mathematics, and problem solving. A second conclusion is that there is a need for a business curriculum that is relevant to business practices. Business programs need to be revised to include greater involvement by both teachers and students with the business community.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The rise in business enrollments in the colleges has been spectacular. There has been an increasing emphasis on preparation for a wide variety of careers in business. "In 1919-20 undergraduate degrees awarded in schools and departments of business accounted for only 3 per cent of the total . . . and in 1949-50, with the returning veterans, they rose to a peak of 72,000 or 17 per cent of the total."¹ The increasing emphasis on preparation for a wide variety of careers in business poses the problem of determining if the graduating students in business are receiving sufficient exposure to general background or basic tool subjects. Pierson warns of the weakness of business graduates in general education in the following statement found in the Carnegie Report of 1959:

The vast majority of students receiving undergraduate degrees from these institutions today have had little or no work in any of the humanities outside English, in college mathematics, in any of the sciences beyond a single one-year course, or in the social sciences outside economics or history . . . The result is that almost all of the students studying for careers in business are not getting anything approaching a solid foundation for their later work.²

¹Frank C. Pierson and others, The Education of American Businessmen (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1959), pp. 7-8.

²Ibid., p. xii.

This criticism has aided the changing curriculum and teaching practices, but as reemphasized by DeCarlo and Robinson³ in 1966 the greatest need for research in business education is a rigorous examination in the curriculum itself both in its construction and its evaluation.⁷

The study of the curriculum for business increases in importance because it has become so large a part of our total educational program. This increase has brought about the creation of new institutions and new programs and has placed the United States in the position of leadership. Other countries are attempting to use our programs as patterns. Numerous persons have seriously challenged the quality of our programs and also the directions taken. With so large an education problem there will undoubtedly be many approaches to its solution. There are certainly many approaches that will prove satisfactory in preparing students in business. The important point to remember is to avoid poorer ways. There must be some common foundation necessary to the training of all business students.

A student training for a career in business has need of two kinds of knowledge: general and technical. There is no sharp line of demarcation between these two fields of knowledge. Rather, there is a

³Charles R. DeCarlo, Ormshee W. Robinson, Education in Business and Industry (New York: The Center for Applied Research in Education, 1966), p. 99.

grey area where the two overlap in a semi-technical area, such as mathematics and communications. However, for the purposes of this study courses not taught by the Business Department will be considered in the general studies field. This study will explore the need for the broad general knowledge of disciplines that will give the student an understanding of the present and future political, economic and social environment, and the semitechnical knowledge that will make available to him such tools as mathematics, statistics, behavioral science, communication skills, and economics. The overall objective will be to determine the kinds of competencies, abilities and understandings in general education that are most desirable for the graduating business student. What competencies, abilities and understandings are most worth transmitting?

One problem in the training of students in business is to determine the kind and amount of general studies they should have. The curriculum should not be a fragmentation of information, but one that will give the student an opportunity to relate what he has learned before and to apply what he has learned to his area of business specialization. The competencies, abilities and understandings obtained from the general studies are basic for a better comprehension in the field of business training. There are several contemporary issues which have a direct bearing on the problem in the preparing of students in business.

First, and probably foremost, is the task of coping with the rapidly increasing store of knowledge. Knowledge in every field is doubling and re-doubling with increased rapidity. Norris, President of Albion College, in a speech delivered before the Detroit Association of Phi Beta Kappa, states:

Other evidence for the explosion of knowledge is commonly offered. Some say the knowledge available at the time of Christ doubled by 1900, again in 1950, once more in 1960, and perhaps a fourth time by today. There are 100,000 journals being printed by scientists alone. Ninety per cent of all the scientists in history are still alive.⁴

A second issue in the training of business students is the problem of rapid obsolescence of knowledge. "The professional engineer today, for example, has what is called a 'half life' of only 10 years . . . that half of what an engineer has learned when he received his degree will be obsolete in 10 years."⁵ This same fact of rapid obsolescence is true in other professions. Therefore, it becomes necessary to educate people to cope with change. "It is a compelling fact of life that we must commit ourselves to being students all our lives. A continuing education,

⁴Louis W. Norris, "It's the Idea of the Thing, "Vital Speeches of the Day, Vol. XXXIII, No. 15, 1967, pp. 469-470.

⁵William W. Brickman, Stanley Bahrer, Automation, Education, Human Values, (New York: School and Society Books, 1966), p. 244.

training and retraining, is our primary response to the challenges of automation and technological change."⁶

The invention and development of the computer also added to this difficulty of rapid obsolescence and has been an important factor in this rapid change. Burck, writing on "The Boundless Age of the Computer" states, "It has profoundly altered the techniques of science . . . above all, it is radically changing business production methods and the art and science of management."⁷ Bloy cautions that it is essential to find ways to meet the challenge of rapid obsolescence and states the problem in the following manner:

We have to discover ways of making students more sophisticated in their approach to technology to help them find ways to use technology according to some conscious criteria rather than to be used by it, to help them gain some "authority" over the fact of technology . . . We can only control what we understand.⁸

As Robert Oppenheimer, one of the great architects of this technological era said about the rapidity of change:

One thing that is new is the prevalence of newness, the changing scale and scope of change itself, so that the world

⁶Ibid., p. 244.

⁷Gilbert Burck, "The Boundless Age of the Computer, "Fortune, Vol. LXIX, No. 101, March, 1964, p. 101.

⁸Brickman and Bahrer, op. cit., , p.342.

alters as we walk it, so that years of man's life measure not some small growth of rearrangement or moderation of what we learn in childhood, but a great upheaval.⁹

This upheaval is one of the most challenging prospects for curriculum planning at this time.

A third issue which causes concern and is pertinent to this study is a growing awareness of the need for social responsibility by business management.

Private enterprise owes its existence to society which created and supports it. Its purpose is to supply society with goods and services . . . for which society pays it a profit . . .

Therefore, whenever the interests of private enterprise are felt to clash with what is good for society, private enterprise will be in danger. Whenever a human institution is not in harmony with the overriding cause of human progress history will in the outcome condemn it . . . Its end and final cause must be man's well being and progress.¹⁰

John Maurice Clark wrote, "We must learn this working meaning of the truth that a community is not merely something to which one looks for benefits . . . but is also something to which one owes obligation."¹¹

⁹Robert Oppenheimer, cited by Ivan L. Henriquez, "Social Progress--An Obligation of Management," The American Association of Collegiate Schools of Business, Vol. IV, No. 3, April, 1968, p. 11.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 9.

¹¹Ibid.

Air and water pollution, highway safety, and the problems of the cities are certainly contemporary problems at least partially created by business and for which business must assume some responsibility to correct. Social problems must be considered in curriculum planning for business students.

A fourth contemporary issue which has direct implications for curriculum planning for business students is the growing international scope of business. "Capital outflows by United States firms for investment in Western Europe expanded from a yearly average of \$850 million in 1960-61 to 1.8 billion in 1966."¹² This growth creates a whole new set of problems. There is a need for international business law, an international patent system, freer flow of technology internationally, business responsibility for the betterment of social and economic conditions in countries where they invest and reap profits.

"The malaise of our age is that our power increases faster than our ability to understand it and use it well."¹³ As our world becomes more complex business becomes more involved with the abstract--laws, relationships, attitudes, ethics. The utility of many abstract forces

¹²Effects of United States Foreign Investment Controls on Western Europe, "International Economic Review, May, 1968, p. 1.

¹³Emmanuel G. Mesthen, "Controlling Man's Brainchild," The Rotarian, December, 1966, p. 29.

affecting business and the impact of business upon the community depend upon some system that can combine ideas and relationships into meaningful and practical forms. It therefore becomes the duty of the educational institutions to provide students with educational experiences which will give them the background necessary to cope with the rapid increase of knowledge, the speed with which knowledge becomes obsolete, the social responsibility necessary for those in the field of business, and the importance of the international scope of business. The remaining years of this century will be a period when man decides whether his inventions will dominate or serve him, destroy or sustain him.

Statement of the Problem

This writer has been concerned with the appropriate curricular offerings in the general studies for the undergraduate student majoring in business. This concern has been shared by many other business educators. The extensive criticisms of the narrow vocational specialization, the relative newness, and the tremendous growth in enrollments of the collegiate business programs has led this investigator to believe that there is a need for a study to determine what competencies, abilities, and understandings are essential to the undergraduate student in business.

The study concerns itself with the following questions:

1. What kinds of competencies, abilities and understandings are essential for the student entering the undergraduate program in business?
2. What are recognized colleges and universities doing in curriculum revision at present?
3. How do college business graduates now working in the field of business evaluate the preparation which they received?
4. How do employers of college trained business students evaluate the graduates they now have employed?
5. What criticisms and suggestions do business student graduates and employers offer to improve present programs?
6. What modifications should be made in the present business curriculum?

Procedures

In order to determine the kinds of competencies, abilities and understandings that are essential to the business graduate, the following procedures were used.

Literature pertaining to both general and business education was reviewed in order to determine (1) the aims of general education, (2) the present direction of business education, and (3) the problems involved in curriculum planning. Additional literature was studied to give the writer a better understanding of contemporary issues which should be the concern of both educators and business people. The

curriculum must provide the student with experiences that will offer direction to his individual citizenship as well as social responsibility in a society which permits his existence.

A second procedure was the study of curricula for general education of colleges and universities recognized as leaders in the field of business. Personal communication with department heads and deans of these schools was made. This was done because various curricula experimentations have already taken place at these institutions. These schools had large staffs and were well funded so that it was possible for them to experiment with their programs.

A survey conducted of college graduates employed in business to ascertain the contribution of present college training to selected competencies, abilities and understandings was made. Employers of college trained business personnel were contacted to collect information of weaknesses and strengths of college business graduates. Personal interviews with businessmen were made to validate the findings of the surveys conducted.

Conclusions drawn upon the basis of the information obtained will be used to reevaluate the general education requirements for undergraduate students majoring in general business at Eastern Montana College.

Delimitations

This study was limited to four groups: (1) employers at the national level who employ students graduating in business programs, (2) employers within the state of Montana who employ students graduating in business programs, (3) Montana State University graduates in the Department of Commerce for the years 1963-68 excluding those in business education, and (4) Eastern Montana College graduates in business education for the years 1963-68.

Definition of Terms

The following definitions have been included in this study to assist the reader in making accurate interpretation of specific terms used.

Business Education. The preparation in specific teaching fields in business as opposed to preparation for job opportunities in business.

Department of Commerce. The Department of Commerce at Montana State University provides programs leading to Bachelor of Science degrees in accounting and business education. When reference is made to the Department of Commerce in this paper it will exclude the program in business education.

General Education. Refers to "those phases of learning which should be a common experience of all men and women; education gained

through dealing with the personal and social problems with which we are all confronted."¹⁴

General Business. "Provides the student with information and competencies which are needed by all, in managing personal business affairs and in using services of the business world."¹⁵

¹⁴Carter V. Good (ed.), Dictionary of Education, McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., New York, 1959, p. 515.

¹⁵American Vocational Association, Inc., Definition of Terms in Vocational Technical and Practical Arts Education (Washington, D. C.: American Vocational Association, Inc.), p. 5.

CHAPTER II

NATURE OF GENERAL EDUCATION FOR THE UNDERGRADUATE COLLEGE STUDENT

The philosophy from which general education has developed can be traced back to the ancient Greeks and Romans. The classical definition of education of the Greeks and Romans meant the forming of a child into a harmonious, well-balanced adult. Such an adult was ideally a perfect balance of moral, intellectual, and physical components. He would be sober, wise, courageous, temperate, possessed of pleasing manners, conscious of his civic and social obligations, fluent in expressing himself, and physically well developed. While the core of his education was centered around language study--grammar, rhetoric, literature--it also included music, philosophy, mathematics, gymnastics. He was to emerge from the education as a representative of the classic ideal--*mens sana in corpore sano*--a sound mind in a sound body. So powerful has this view of education been that after 2,000 years, many still consider it valid. The idea that schools exist to mold an individual into a well developed and harmonious adult reflects the classic aim. This classic aim has influenced American education.

European and American education has also been influenced by the Hebrew or Jewish concept and the more recent concept of the behavioristic psychologists. The Jewish belief held that education was a moral enterprise. The Jewish goal was creating an individual who

not only knew what was right, but who did what was right. This idea of the moral individual as a goal of education was transmitted to Western Civilization through Christianity and the Protestant Reformation.

A more recent theory of education is that of the twentieth century behavioristic psychologists. They have attempted to put human behavior and education on a rigidly scientific basis. Their assumption has been that education is "conditioning," and results can be controlled by rewards and punishment.

The classical, the Jewish, and the behavioristic concepts of education are open to debate. Anthropologists and sociologists have formulated a definition of education which is generally accepted. All people have a culture which consists of their learned behavior. Education is the passing on of this culture. It includes knowledge of both tangibles and intangibles--tools, clothing, shelter, language, beliefs, aspirations, attitudes, and religion. In other words--education is the transmission of knowledge, skills, and values of a culture.

Adler defined education broadly as "a process which aims at the improvement or betterment of men, in themselves and in relations to society."¹ Whitehead stated, "Wisdom is the fruit of a balanced

Mortimer J. Adler, "Labor, Leisure, and Liberal Education," Toward the Liberally Educated Executive (New York: The New American Library of World Literature, Inc. 1960), pp. 72-84.

development. It is this balanced growth of individuality which should be the aim of education to secure."² President Horn of the University of Rhode Island recently reminded us of the scope of education:

A truly liberal education is the product of a lifetime of learning, study, reflection. Even then few individuals attain it. The best the college can do is to lay the foundation for a liberal education, to inculcate the habits of mind, breadth of interest, and enlargement of spirit which, when continued and enriched during the later years--and there will be more of these later years for most of us--can result in a true liberal education.³

Education takes a lifetime, however college should help an individual gain the foundation for pursuing this liberal or general education.

General Education Defined

A definition of "general education" should be made at this point because it is a broad term and sometimes only vaguely understood. For the purpose of this study, courses not taught by the Business Department will be considered in the "general education" field. The terms "liberal" and "general" are widely used in reference to education and have come to be almost synonymous in meaning. Traditionally, "liberal education"

²Alfred North Whitehead, "The Aims of Education," Ibid., pp. 50-52.

³Francis H. Horn, "A Lifetime of Learning," Ibid., pp. 14-15.

has drawn from subjects and disciplines in the arts and science area. General education recognizes the need for selection of courses most worthwhile for the student who can spend only a limited part of his time on general studies. It is best conceived in terms of competencies, abilities, and understandings developed within the individual which are not directly vocational in nature. Thus such education should develop the breadth of learning necessary to reinforce the narrow depth of specialization.

In a culture as many-faceted as that found in America, there is a tendency to educate toward a variety of ends, many of which seem inconsistent with one another. The American culture has many goals. The problem is that multiple goals do not direct an activity in one direction. Just as there appears to be a controversy over values in the American culture, there is also a controversy over which knowledge is most important. The whole range and character of American culture--varied and vast and changing--needs to be borne in mind as one considers the specific problems and potentialities of general education. The contemporary struggle over values is itself a call for honest reappraisal of educational aims and objectives.

The problem of "translating values into curriculum"⁴ according to

⁴Daniel Bell, The Reforming of General Education, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1966), p. 1.

Bell is complicated by our culture's conflicting goals:

Like all other colleges, Columbia is bounded by the American culture and entwined in that culture's paradoxical assumptions: a desire for cultivation along with a utilitarian purpose to education; a populist spirit in the classroom (are students ever deferential to professors?) and a respect for learning; a training for citizenship, yet a skepticism about laws; a deference to humanitas and an emphasis on the acquisition of technique and training for the purposes of a career. To call attention to these antinomies is not necessarily to mock them; rather, it is to point up the difficulties that any educator faces when, in translating values into curriculum, he seeks to realize the purposes of American society. One knows from logic, if not from experience, that one cannot maximize two functions at the same time, though American society with its Benthamine temper, persists in seeking the greatest good for the greatest number.⁵

General education includes an understanding of man's environment, his society, and the historical background of his civilization. It is a study of past and present cultures as expressed in literature and the arts, and should provide a broad background to reinforce the constrictive track of specialization. General education in the United States has its origin in the humanistic education of ancient Greece and Rome.

History of General Education in the United States

During the period from World War I on through World War II and into the fifties, many American colleges developed general education

⁵Ibid., p. 1.

programs. The establishment of orientation courses and the introduction of the course in Contemporary Civilization at Columbia College of Columbia University in 1919 marked the beginning of the general education movement in the United States. This was the start of a gradual and quiet revolution in undergraduate instruction in colleges throughout the country. The reasons for the change according to Bell were: (1) the rejection of the German tradition of the University following World War I, (2) the abandonment of sterile classicism such as the Latin entrance requirement, and (3) the changing character of the student body as more children of immigrants enrolled.⁶ The original idea was to inculcate the humanistic rather than a professional orientation. During the period of 1919 to 1960 general education had three broad aims as characterized by Bell:

1. to provide a "common learning";
2. to give the student a comprehensive understanding of the Western tradition;
3. to combat intellectual fragmentation with interdisciplinary courses.⁷

Columbia, Harvard, and the University of Chicago have provided

⁶Ibid., pp. 18-19.

⁷Ibid., p. 282.

three basic models of general education which hundreds of other colleges have adopted.⁸ Columbia College of Columbia University was a pioneer in the field of general education. Its program was embodied in the idea of three broad courses which evolved over a period of years. These courses were Contemporary Civilization, the Humanities, and the Sciences. It was hoped that this curriculum could be "coextensive with life."⁹ These courses were required of all students.

From 1940 to 1965 the College of the University of Chicago engaged in the most thorough experiment in general education of any college in the United States.¹⁰ The Chicago plan sought to draw together disciplines in three fields--humanities, social sciences, and the natural sciences--and to consider problems which they by their nature, could only be understood by applying concepts from difference disciplines. It was also an attempt to break the traditional pattern of 8-4-4 in American education. Its president, Robert M. Hutchins, proposed combining the last two years of secondary school with the first two years of college and to form a new college devoted entirely to general education with a completely prescribed curriculum.

⁸Ibid., p. 2.

⁹Baker Brownell, The College and the Community. (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1952), p. 183.

¹⁰Bell, op. cit., p. 26.

Bell, who taught general education courses at Chicago during the forties, writes whimsically of the value of these courses at that time:

The courses, as I can testify from personal experience were extra-ordinary intellectual adventures for the teaching staff; and perhaps this was its prize, if unintended, virtue, for what a teacher finds exciting he can communicate best to his students. Whether in the end the courses had the intellectual unity or theoretical clarity claimed for them is moot.¹¹

The movement toward general education received great impetus with the publication of the Harvard report in 1945 entitled General Education in a Free Society. This report came to be known as the Redbook. In many places it became the bible of general education. Its purpose was to formulate a complete educational philosophy for America. The necessary movement to general education, according to this report, was a result of the change in character of the high school. In 1870, the base line chosen by the authors, the function of the high school was to prepare children of the well-to-do for college.¹² In 1945 when the Redbook was published it contained the following statement: "Except for a small minority, the high school has . . . ceased to be a preparatory school in the old sense of the word."¹³ The high schools of 1945, the Redbook

¹¹Ibid., p. 32.

¹²Ibid., p. 39.

¹³Ibid., p. 40.

contended, has failed to provide "a common learning" for all Americans.¹⁴

The overall theme set forth in the Harvard report was the "heritage of Western Civilization."¹⁵ The program proposed was radically different from what had existed at Harvard up to this time. It proposed that each student take the same lower-level humanities courses, the same lower-level social science courses, and one of two lower-level natural science courses. In addition, each student would take three upper-level general education courses. The Redbook proposals were never actually adopted at Harvard even though the book was widely read and discussed.

Harvard has listed its aims of general education as follows: (1) to teach the student to think effectively, (2) to communicate thought, (3) to make relevant judgments, and (4) to discriminate among values.¹⁶

The late Baker Brownell, formerly a professor of philosophy at Northwestern University, wrote in 1959 what he felt the primary purposes of general education should be: (1) to integrate the student's

¹⁴Ibid., p. 39.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 43.

¹⁶Hugh S. Brown and Lewis B. Mayhew, American Higher Education, (New York: The Center for Applied Research in Education, Inc., 1965), p. 11.

learning by studying relationships between various fields of interest, (2) to acquaint the student with the frontier problems of modern interest, (3) to help him express himself effectively in modern problems, and (4) to help him find an adequate relationship with the world.¹⁷

The first of these four purposes--to integrate the student's learning between various fields--Brownell felt was necessary in order to give the student a feeling of "the wholeness of the world."¹⁸ To give this, there should be a continuity across different fields of learning. The subject matter of true knowledge, he felt, no longer followed departmental classifications. The division between physics and chemistry, for instance, had become an arbitrary line. Once each required different skills and ways of thinking, and now they require knowledge of each other. The inter-relationship is true of other fields as well, as Brownell observed, "The relation of sciences not only to one another, but to modern social and appreciative life is clearly one of the critical problems of this day."¹⁹

The second purpose stated by Brownell was that a college education should acquaint people with contemporary world interests and

¹⁷Brownell, *op. cit.*, p. 184.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, p. 186.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, p. 187.

situations and expressed the feeling that the student should have knowledge of the human community, its current problems, and trends of thought. "Though information alone is not an educational ideal," he said, "there are matters of information without which an adequate response to the active world is hardly possible."²⁰ The educated person should have some knowledge, for instance, of art, music, conservation, the scientific cosmos, and the social consequences of technology; in short, of human responses to a complex world.

The third purpose of the general education courses--to help the student to express himself as a significant factor in contemporary problems--involved effective thinking and communication of this thought. In this Brownell held that learning should not merely be a receptive process, but also a reaction to this new knowledge. Thus, an educated individual should be able to express himself--to react responsibly and imaginatively to material presented to him.

The fourth aim of general education stated by Brownell--to help the individual find an adequate relationship with the world--entailed orienting the student to the world by integrating his knowledge so that he could function effectively as an individual. His education should give him a sense of urgency of social problems, and the relation of facts

²⁰Ibid., p. 187.

to the human situation. Education should make significant the wholeness and interdependence of the different aspects of life to the individual. It should help him find his own personal identity and to understand the identity of others.

In 1944 the American Council on Education published A Design for General Education. In the Council's judgment general education should lead the student to be concerned with the health of himself and others; to develop communication skills; to work for emotional and social adjustment; to enable him to make satisfactory family and marital adjustment; to do his part in dealing with American and international social, economic and political problems; to understand natural phenomena, and use scientific methods in the solution of his problems; to find self-expression in literature, music, and the arts; to understand the meaning and value of life; to choose a vocation that would enable him to make a contribution to society. This Council listed the following ten objectives for general education:

1. To improve and maintain his own health and take his share of responsibility for protecting the health of others;
2. To communicate through his own language in writing and speaking at the level of expression adequate to the needs of educated people;
3. To attain a sound emotional and social adjustment through the enjoyment of a wide range of social

- relationships and the experience of working co-operatively with others;
4. To think through the problems and to gain the basic orientation that will better enable him to make a satisfactory family and marital adjustment;
 5. To do his part as an active and intelligent citizen in dealing with the interrelated social, economic, and political problems of American life and in solving the problems of postwar international reconstruction;
 6. To act in the light of an understanding of the natural phenomena in his environment in its implications for human society and human welfare, to use scientific methods in the solution of his problems, and to employ useful nonverbal methods of thought and communications;
 7. To find self-expression in literature and to share through literature man's experience and his motivating ideas and ideals;
 8. To find a means of self-expression in music and in the various visual arts and crafts, and to understand and appreciate art and music as reflections both of individual experience and of social patterns and movements;
 9. To practice clear and integrated thinking about the meaning and value of life;
 10. To choose a vocation that will make optimum use of his talents and enable him to make an appropriate contribution to the needs of society.²¹

Fifteen years later, in 1959, the University of South Florida formulated its aims of general education. Though the aims were more

²¹Brown and Mayhew, op. cit., p. 8.

briefly stated, they were similar to those listed by the American Council on Education in 1944. The University of South Florida listed its aims of general education as follows:

The degree programs of the University are designed to promote the following general aims for all students:

1. The necessary skills in writing, speaking, reading and listening;
2. Self-reliance through the ability to think clearly;
3. An understanding of oneself and one's relationship to others;
4. Growing convictions based on the search for truth;
5. An understanding and appreciation of our cultural, social, scientific and spiritual heritage;
6. An intelligent approach to local, national, and world problems leading to responsible and responsive citizenship and leadership in life;
7. Some practical understanding of another language;
8. Professional competence based on high ethical standards in preparation not alone for the immediate job but for a lifetime of responsible leadership in professional activities;
9. Healthful development of the body.²²

²²Accent on Learning, (Tampa: The University of South Florida, 1959), cited by Hugh S. Brown and Lewis B. Mayhew, American Higher Education (New York: The Center for Applied Research in Education, Inc., 1965), p. 35.

The general aims listed above are typical of those stated in many college catalogs. These aims were formulated during the 1940's and 1950's when proposals for reform of curriculum spread through many colleges. This curriculum reform was aimed at combating over-specialization at the undergraduate level. The goal was to give the student a unifying overview--that is a relevance of a particular course to the student and to other courses. This was the most important trend in higher education during this period. It came to be known as the general education movement.

One of the most important results of this movement has been the transformation of precollegiate schooling during the past forty years. Barzun, Columbia's provost, explained this in a speech at a convocation at Hofstra University in 1963. This speech received nationwide attention. Speaking of the transformation which has taken place in the high school, Professor Barzun declared that the good high school now teaches what the students formerly learned in college:

The good high school now gives the historical surveys, the introductions to social science, the great books, that formed the substance of general education. What is more, the Advanced Placement System has managed to fill in the old vacuum of the eleventh and twelfth grades with real work, so that more and more freshmen--even without Advanced Placement--find the first year of college feeble and repetitious. They've had the calculus, they've had a grown-up course in American history, they've read Homer and Tolstoy. College holds for them no further revelations; it no longer marks the passage from pupil

to student, from make-believe exercises to real thought . . .²³

In this same speech, Barzun explained that the colleges are being changed by the pressures from the more advanced curriculum of the high school and by specialization in the graduate school:

If we stand off and look at the silhouette of the American college--I speak of the solid ones, not the shaky imitations--what we see is the thinning and flattening out of its once distinctive curriculum under pressure from above and below; the high school taking away the lower years, the graduate and professional schools the upper.²⁴

Because of this change in high school curriculum, because of the trend to postpone specialization until graduate school and for various other reasons, colleges are once again undergoing change and the general education program has been in difficulty in many colleges in recent years.²⁵

Present Trends in General Education

The trend in general education at present is to draw away from

²³From a speech by Jacques Barzun entitled "College to University--and After," delivered at Hofstra University, December 12, 1963, reprinted in The American Scholar XXXIII, No. 2 (Spring 1964), pp. 212-20.

²⁴Ibid., pp. 212-20.

²⁵Bell, op. cit., p. 54.

rigidly constructed programs for all students and to move to a more flexible and personal approach which takes the individual student's past accomplishments and fields of interest into consideration. This has come about partly because of the greater maturity of many entering freshmen, and partly because of the intellectual and institutional difficulties encountered by many colleges in their general education programs.

Recently Columbia, Chicago, Harvard and other colleges have in varying degrees been calling their programs in general education into question. Bell feels that the hopes of interdisciplinary integration of the curriculum, so high twenty years ago, have not materialized, and gives the following reasons: (1) disciplines have become more intensive and specialized, (2) there has been a multiplication of new knowledge in each discipline, (3) and there has been a lack of effort to define unifying conceptual structures.²⁶

In 1966, Bell wrote of the difficulties of general education experienced at many institutions, with special emphasis on the experiences at Columbia, Harvard, and Chicago. Of Columbia he said:

²⁶Daniel Bell, "The Scholar Cornered," The American Scholar, XXXVII (Summer, 1968), pp. 401-6. See Appendix A, p. 203, for excerpts from this article.

Beginning with the class that entered in 1954, Columbia College abandoned the prevailing "maturity credit" system, which had allowed a student to take a general degree, and instead required all students to complete a "major" or "concentration" in one department . . . While the trends were evident before the introduction of the change, the major system, by encouraging students . . . to begin their majors in their sophomore or even freshman years, has fractured the "unity" of the lower college, with its emphasis on a common-core program.²⁷

Writing of the program at Harvard, Bell stated, "The general education program at Harvard, in the words of a recent review committee, has been eroded."²⁸ Of Chicago, Bell wrote, "The College of the University of Chicago is in the throes of readjustment that may lead to the almost complete reversal of general education as practiced there for twenty years."²⁹

This disenchantment of many colleges with the idea of general education has been caused by various problems. The main problems according to Bell are:

1. It has been difficult to recruit teachers to teach general education courses.
2. The expansion of knowledge in all fields has made it impossible to integrate courses.

²⁷Bell, The Reforming of General Education, op. cit., pp. 197-198.

²⁸Ibid., p. 183.

²⁹Ibid., p. 190.

3. The increase in enrollments has compounded the problem.
4. There has been a shift in the center of gravity from the undergraduate to the graduate school, especially during the past ten years.
5. The high school now teaches much in the general education field.
6. There has been a shift of interest in Western Civilization to an interest in many other cultures such as that of South East Asia and Africa.³⁰

This is a period of intense change in our society. "Whirl is king, having driven out Zeus," Bell declares of our modern culture. He continues, "Fixity is deposed. Today we are at the point of breaking up all fixed points of reference in formal genres."³¹ The computer is claimed to be more revolutionary than the wheel, the printing press, the steam engine, the electric motor, or atomic energy. No other single item of capital goods has changed the basic terms of human activity in so short a time.³²

Robert M. Hutchins, president of the University of Chicago during its years of organizing and experimenting with the general education

³⁰Ibid., pp. 275-189.

³¹Maxwell H. Goldberg, "And See It Whole," Automation, Education, and Human Values (New York: School and Society Books, 1966), p. 342.

³²Ibid., p. 343.

program, and at present head of California's Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions, shares Bell's pessimism about the present trend away from general education in American colleges and universities. In Hutchin's new book, The Learning Society, published in 1968, he deplors the present form of schooling as "nonhuman, inhuman and antihuman." Hutchins believes that the goal of United States society, and thus of its educational system is at present technological progress. He believes that Americans have failed to distinguish between training and education. Hutchins does see hope, however, for the twenty-first century, when technology will give men time to learn and men will be educated not to fit into a system, but to discover the richness of life.³³

Bell feels that the way to cope with the increasing flood of knowledge is to teach the student "the principles of a discipline and to show him how basic concepts can be reorganized so as to assimilate the new discoveries in a field."³⁴ This can best be done, he feels, by showing the relationships in knowledge:

The fundamental truism, perhaps, is that knowledge is relational. Knowledge is the clarification of the structure of relationships. The purpose of education is to teach students how to understand these relationships. That is the changeless

³³"A New Life of the Mind," Time, 92:5, August 2, 1968, p. 50.

³⁴Bell, The American Scholar, op. cit., p. 405.

= =

! #) & 9 & ') & ' # * # \$ (# * &) % () (# * & + K P & ' &
+ & ' # ' \$ \$ () # + :) 9 # % - # =>

* & # & ' # * # ! ! + # % (& \$. # \$ & ' # * \$ # #) & 9
- #) # \$ # % (&) * \$ - \$! 1 & ' # # # - #) # \$ # % (&)
9 & ' \$ * % (') - #) & ' # + & \$ # 0 & (') & & # 1 L ' # ! \$
(& ' # (# & 1 & ' # ! \$ # \$ * % & 9 (') - # 1) % &
% ' () & \$ (&) 9 # (! # &) 9 # # ! + # & & '
& (# % (&) & ' # ! & & ' # \$ # & () # L = 7

\$) (8 # * * # 1 &) & # (\$ # & \$ + % (&) % \$
')) % !) & \$ &) 1 9 \$) + & ' # %) - # \$)) # - # (&) -
(&) 1 L \$ & ! # % # !) % & ' & 9 # \$ # & ' # \$ % # % (&
\$ * # * # 1 & ' & 9 # % #) &)) # # % (&) A * * \$
) # \$ # % (&) & ' # +) % &) + # \$)) - & ()
) & \$ * # \$ 1 = B ?

. # & ' &) & ' # (!) - %) % - # 1 & ' # % &
&) + & ' # (# - # ! & # & & # (' ! % # + () (# * & 4
&) 1) % . # \$ + (&) + :) 9 # % - # % &) (& . # +) (&
& % # 9 & ' & ' # - \$) % + :) 9 # % - # 1 9 ' (' ! : # ! * \$

Q + % 1 * D H 7

= Q ! # 1 ((&

Q % # \$ - 1 * (& 1 * = D D

