Teaching Chapter 2

***LIBERAL ARTS:***

**The Meaning, Purpose, and Value of General Education**

Key Instructional *Goals* of this Chapter

The most important instructional goal of this chapter is to address the following two questions: (a) the “what” question—help students understand *what* a “liberal arts” education, and (b) the “so what” question—help students appreciate *why* this component of their college education plays a key role in promoting their personal success.

*Defining* a Liberal Arts Education: What is it?

Many new students are likely to be unfamiliar with the term “liberal arts,” or may have misconceptions or misgivings about it. Consequently, an important first step toward teaching this unit effectively is to clarify the meaning and purpose of the liberal arts. Student responses to the “Activate Your Thinking” question at the very start of the chapter may be used as a springboard for launching a lively (and perhaps humorous) discussion of the true meaning and purpose of the liberal arts.

It should be noted out that there is variability in how the liberal arts are defined and described on different campuses. Sometimes the term is used to refer to *subject matter*—the courses that comprise the liberal arts curriculum (or the liberal arts “and sciences” curriculum), while at other times it’s used to refer to an educational *process*—a liberal arts education (or liberal learning). Compounding the inconsistency is the fact that the term “general education” is often used interchangeably with liberal arts. Thus, it may be necessary to point out this variability and identify the particular language used on your particular campus. You could mention to students that the variability in terminology doesn’t necessarily reflect confusion or disagreement, but represents different ways of explaining the same concept. For example, even though campuses may refer to the liberal arts as “*general* education,” “*breadth* requirements” or the “*core* curriculum,” all of these terms highlight the fact that the liberal arts represent the broadest and most foundational component of the college experience.

There are two key characteristics of how the liberal arts are defined in chapter 2 that should be intentionally underscored in class:

1. The liberal arts embrace both the formal academic curriculum and the *co-curriculum* (holistic development). A liberal arts education is a process that promotes student appreciation of breadth and “wholeness,” which comes in two forms: a broadened perspective and appreciation of the whole *world* and the whole *person*.

In the text, we treat the traditional “wellness wheel” as holistic development and include it as an integral element of a liberal arts education. Including holistic development as a component of a liberal arts education serves to elevate the importance of student involvement in campus life and reinforces the notion that the co-curriculum is equally important to educational and professional success as the course curriculum. Thus, when discussing the meaning and purpose of the liberal arts in class, you might reinforce the relevance of the co-curriculum and point out that student development professionals play a central educational role on campus; they are not just support staff who organize “extracurricular” activities and supply “supplemental” services.

2. One key component of a liberal arts education is the development of *academic skills* (e.g., writing and reading) introduced in skill-building “lower division” and “developmental” courses. In chapter 2, we attempted to highlight the fact that academic skill-development courses focus on transferable, lifelong-learning skills that are essential to the purpose of a liberal arts education. If you reinforce this point in class, it may serve to improve student perceptions of their academic skill-building courses and elevate student motivation in these courses (as well as support and validate the instructors who teach them). Taking a little class time to highlight the transferability and durability of academic skills as “life skills” that promote success in all majors and any career may provide students with a motivational “shot in the arm” at the outset of their college experience, particularly students enrolled in developmental courses.

*Motivating* Students about the Liberal Arts (“Why do we have to take these courses anyway?”)

We place the liberal arts chapter at the beginning of the text is for *motivational* purposes. Our intent was to build students’ enthusiasm for the component of their college education that’s encountered early in the college experience, and which is often misperceived as irrelevant to their major and career plans. Perhaps Chapter 2’s most distinctive feature is its attempt to provide strong arguments and persuasive evidence for the full range of personal and professional advantages associated with the liberal arts. The chapter tries to make a strong case for the benefits of the value of general education. You can add to our motivational mission by reinforcing the benefits of the liberal arts and highlighting their importance for the multiple life roles that students will play beyond college (e.g., as “whole” persons, family members, and citizens).

Thus, the “so what” question about a liberal arts education may be addressed by underscoring its importance for students’ *academic*, *professional*, and *personal* success. You can organize a short classroom presentation that builds student enthusiasm and motivation for the liberal arts by emphasizing the following points:

1. Being a generalist is as important for career success as being a specialist.

2. Building skills and broadening perspectives is as important for success as earning academic

units and checking off degree requirements.

3. Attending college is not just about earning a better living; it’s also about living a better life.

Discussing the *Mission & Goals* of Your College in Relation to the Liberal Arts

When you are discussing the meaning and purpose of the liberal arts, you’re really discussing the meaning and purpose of a college education. Thus, this unit may be the time to introduce your students to the *mission statement and institutional goals* of your college. Most mission statements and institutional goals reflect the breadth and purposes of a liberal arts education discussed in Chapter 2. We strongly recommend that you take the opportunity to discuss your institution’s mission in the context of the liberal arts because it’s unlikely that your students will be intentionally and systematically introduced to the mission and purpose of your college anywhere else in the college curriculum or at any other time in their college experience. The FYE course is likely to be the only place in the curriculum where students are formally introduced to the distinctive purpose and unique goals of the specific institution they chose for postsecondary education.

This chapter may also be the time to point out how your institution differs from others that dot the American postsecondary landscape. American colleges and universities comprise the most diverse system of higher education in the world and the missions of our diverse institutions vary considerably, depending on whether they are community colleges, liberal arts colleges, comprehensive state universities, or research-extensive universities. Students should be aware of your institution’s distinctive place and purpose, and its advantages relative to other types of colleges and universities. (In the spirit of honest self-disclosure, students should also be apprised of how to minimize the common disadvantages associated with the type of institution they’ve chosen to attend.)

Using the Liberal Arts as a *Gateway Topic* for the Text and Your Course

Chapter 2 can serve as an effective introduction or gateway to the entire textbook and, perhaps, your entire course. The liberal arts chapter was positioned early in the text because the nature of its content allows it to connect with all subsequent chapters in the text. The liberal arts component of a college education represents the foundation for the entire college experience, particularly if holistic (whole-person) development is included as one of its key components. Thus, Chapter 2 may be used to provide an effective bridge to all subsequent topics. Its overarching discussion of holistic development provides an effective overview of the whole person—the specific components of which are addressed separately and more intensively in subsequent chapters.

For example, Chapter 2 segues smoothly into the following chapter on goal-setting and motivation because the liberal arts provide students with intellectual *breadth* and *general* (foundational) education that enable students to crystallize and clarify their life goals. Also, Chapter 2’s discussion of liberal education as a vehicle for “liberating” people in a democracy to make wise judgments and thoughtful decisions about their elected political leaders provides a foundation for discussing strategic learning and higher-level thinking skills. Also, the variety of broadening perspectives developed by a liberal education also dovetails nicely with Chapter 9’s focus on diversity. Thus, you may be able to use Chapter 2 as a hub or linchpin for introducing and integrating different instructional units of the text, thereby bringing greater conceptual unity and coherence to your course.

Introducing Strategies for *Self-Management & Personal Responsibility* within the Context of the Liberal Arts

Self-management and personal responsibility connect with the liberal arts’ “liberating” purpose because they are lifelong-learning skills needed for exercising personal freedom responsibly and for transitioning effectively from being managed primarily by others (in high school) to self-management (in college).

Introducing strategies for time-management within the context of the liberal arts also put a more positive spin on the topic of personal responsibility that can be resisted by students because it smacks of sounding “parental” topic (e.g., you need to become “more responsible.”) You can offer recommendations for personal responsibility as constructive strategies for effectively exercising the newfound freedoms students will enjoy in college—for example, more freedom from required classroom “seat time,” more “free time” that they have the power to control, and more freedom to make their own educational decisions.

Possible *Exercises/Assignments* for Chapter 2

Exercise for Promoting Student Awareness that Liberal Arts Skills are *Career-Relevant* Skills

Steps:

1. Have your students assume the role of an employer and ask them to brainstorm those skills they

would most value in a potential employee.

2. List these skills on the board as students generate them.

3. After the brainstorming process slows down, ask students to help you group the skills they

generated into clusters or categories of skill sets.

4. Have students compare their categories of work skills with the sets of skills developed by a

liberal arts education (pp. 38-39).

The comparison should reveal considerable overlap between the work skills that your students generated and those developed by a liberal arts education. This overlap should serve to heighten student awareness that general education is really career preparation.

The *Lifeline* Exercise: Helping Students Discover that a College Education is not

only Preparation for a Career, but Preparation for Life

Steps:

1. Ask students to draw a horizontal line across the longer side of an 81/2-by-11 sheet of

paper.

2. Have them place their date of birth on the far left of the line and their anticipated age of

death on the far right of the line. (We realize that the topic of death can be threatening to some

students; one way to reduce the intensity of its threat would be to quickly mention that death is

a reality all of humanity faces, which is why it’s a topic that is discussed in the Humanities, and

it’s why spirituality is included as a key dimension of holistic development.)

3. Have students place the current date in its approximate place along their lifeline. (For the

typical 18-year-old freshman, this should be about one-fifth of the way along the line; for re-

entry students, it’s likely to be farther to the right.)

4. Ask students to fill in dates along the line that represent important or significant events in their

life thus far, both good and bad (e.g., high school graduation, birth of a sibling, parents’

divorce).

5. Ask students to project themselves into the future and enter the events on the timeline that they

think will happen to them by the time they die. (Students could use the dimensions of self

comprising the holistic development wheel as a stimulus to prompt their thinking about future

life events, and to jog their memory of previous life events in step 4.)

6. Ask students to reflect on their lifeline and note how many of its key events are related directly

to work or career, compared to those that relate to other aspects of their life. Chances are that

students will discover a larger number of significant life events relating to issues other than

their job or career.

7. Have students write a short reflection paper in which they examine how the liberal arts skills

developed in Chapter 2 may help to prepare them for the events and roles they’ll encounter in

their future life.

Note: This reflection paper may be tweaked to promote additional self-awareness by asking students to reflect on those experiences that have exerted the most influence on who they are now, and what future experiences are likely to have the most positive influence on who they want to become.

Panel Presentation by Faculty Representing *Different Academic Disciplines*

Since Chapter 2 discusses the different academic disciplines that comprise the liberal arts curriculum, one way in which these diverse disciplinary perspectives may be compared and contrasted is by having representatives from different divisions of the liberal arts come to class for a panel discussion. The discussion could revolve around the types of questions the disciplines ask and the methods they use to answer them. Or, the discussion could revolve around a contemporary issue or problem (e.g., terrorism), whereby faculty from different disciplines share ideas about how their particular discipline attempts to understand the issue’s causes and its possible solutions.

In addition to helping students appreciate differences among the liberal-arts disciplines, this exercise also introduces new students to different members of your faculty, and it serves to involve more faculty in the seminar—which may increase their interest in and support of the course. Another potential advantage of this assignment is that it may increase student interest in the academic fields that comprise the liberal arts, which may results in their choosing one of these often undersubscribed fields as a college major or minor.

Students Create User-Friendly Checklists of General Education Requirements

Since Chapter 2 included discussion of the academic divisions and courses that comprise the liberal arts curriculum, this may be the ideal time to get students familiar with your college catalog and your college’s general education requirements. The size and organization of college catalogs can sometimes be off-putting to students, causing some students to experience “catalog anxiety” and catalog avoidance. One way to help new students overcome catalog anxiety and avoidance is by giving them support and an incentive to open their catalog and make use of it. This incentive could take the form of an assignment in which students are asked to convert the general-education requirement buried within their college catalog into more user-friendly student checklists.

This exercise could be completed individually or in small groups, using a jigsaw group-learning format whereby each member of a small team takes responsibility for identifying and pulling out the general-education requirements for one academic division of the liberal arts, then convenes as a team to integrate their separate parts into a unified, comprehensive list. (Described later in this section are step-by-step instructions for different group-learning formats that could be adapted for this catalog exercise.) At the very least, this exercise ensures that every student obtains a college catalog and opens it at least once during their first term in college.

Using the “Jigsaw” Format for Small-Group Work to Help Student Identify and Integrate the Multiple Perspectives of a Liberal Arts Education

A recurrent theme throughout Chapter 2 is that a liberal arts education involves broadening students’ perspective of the *world* via different disciplinary, chronological, and social-spatial perspectives, and broadening their perspective of *themselves* via examining different dimensions of the “whole self” (holistic development).

Helping students to appreciate the value of taking multiple perspectives can be accomplished effectively and efficiently with small-group work by having individual students learn about different perspectives and then having them share their respective perspectives in small groups—where they integrate these different perspectives into a multi-dimensional whole. Listed below are several *jigsaw* group-learning formats that are ideal for helping students identify and integrate the multiple perspectives associated with a liberal arts education. These below-listed group formats may be applied to the perspectives of different academic disciplines (Chapter 2, pp. 34-36), to different dimensions of holistic development (pp. 44-50), or to different chronological and social-spatial perspectives (pp. 59-61).

***Jigsaw***

Steps:

1. Have students form 3 or 4-member teams and ask each teammate to assume responsibility for

becoming an “expert” on one perspective or dimension (e.g., the perspective of an academic

discipline, a particular chronological perspective, or one dimension of holistic development).

2. Each student applies his/her perspective to a particular topic or issue (e.g., prejudice, poverty,

war).

3. Members leave their respective “home teams” to join members of other teams who are also

“experts” on the same perspective. (Note: If the perspectives are those of different academic

disciplines, these student experts could make a group appointment with a “faculty expert” in

the discipline whose perspective they are taking.)

3. After meeting in their “expert groups,” students then return to their home team and teach their

individual area of expertise to their teammates.

4. Lastly, students piece together their specialized perspectives (like a “jigsaw” puzzle) into a

larger whole that represents a more comprehensive view of the issue (Aronson, et al., 1978).

To help students stretch the range of perspectives in which they develop expertise, groups could be given several jigsaw tasks, and with team members assuming expertise in a different perspective on each successive task.

To bring some variety to this jigsaw procedure, listed below are modifications of the original jigsaw format that may be used in lieu of, or in addition to the original Jigsaw

***Jigsaw II***

This procedures involves a slight modification of the original *Jigsaw* in which the final step in the process is for team members to take an *individual quiz or test* on the material they have taught each other (Slavin, 1980).

***Double Expert-Group Jigsaw***

Another variation of the original *Jigsaw* in which expert groups with the same subtopic *split in half*, creating “double expert” groups. This format enables experts to meet in a smaller group setting and adds an *“Experts Consult”* option, whereby members of the two expert groups can consult with each other before returning to their teams to complete the jigsaw (Kagan, 1992).

***Co-op Co-op***

Steps:

1. Students engage in a class discussion about a particular issue or problem and identify the key

dimensions or perspectives that they think are involved in its cause and/or solution.

2. Different 4-member teams are formed to address all of the key dimensions or perspectives that

have been identified.

3. Within each team, students subdivide their work, with individual teammates becoming experts

in one chosen dimension or perspective.

4. The experts research their different components individually and present the results of their

findings to their team.

5. Lastly, the team synthesizes these individually completed reports into a single group product

and makes a team presentation on their group product to the whole class—using whatever

format they prefer (e.g., oral, written, or multi-media) (Kagan, 1985).

***Co-op Jigsaw***

The first three steps in this procedure are identical to *Co-op Co-op*, but steps 4-6 differ as follows:

4. Each team’s expert meets with experts from other teams that are working on the same

dimension or perspective.

5. After discussing their specialized component in their expert groups, the expert groups make

presentations to the entire class.

6. Lastly, experts return to their home teams and integrate their separate work into a unified team

product (Kagan, 1985).

***Co-op Jigsaw II***

Steps:

1. Teams members first present their different perspectives on a particular topic or issue.

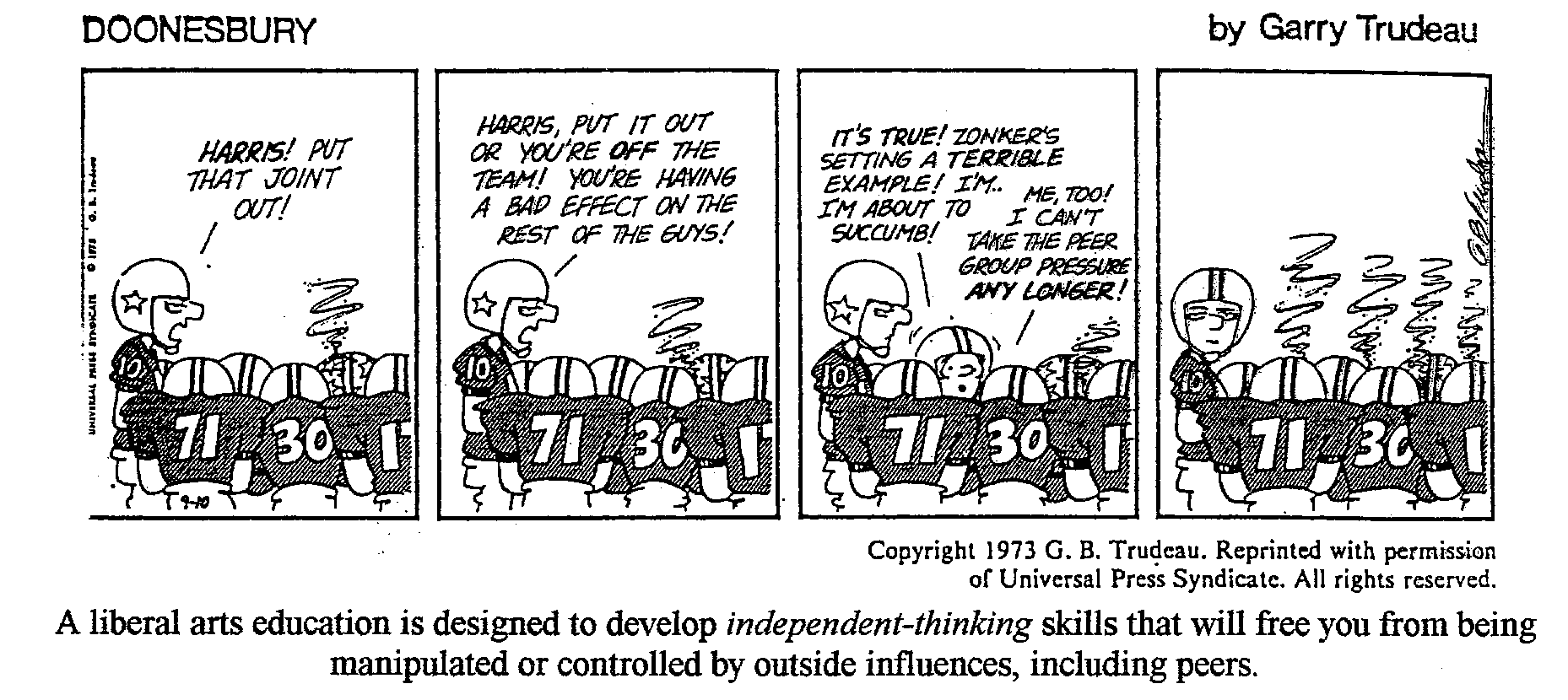
2. Students leave their teams to join expert groups that specialize in learning one transferable

liberal-arts skill (e.g., writing, speaking, or multi-media communication)

3. Experts return to their home team and apply these liberal-arts skills to the team product

(Kagan, 1992).

Additional Material Excised from the *First Edition* of the Textbook that May be Used in Lectures or as Reading Assignments

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The Liberal Arts Provide You with a Multi-Dimensional Perspective and

Multiple Thinking Tools

The liberal arts provide a relevant foundation for success in any college major or professional career. Thebroad, balanced base of knowledge provided by a liberal arts education enables you to view issues or problems from *multiple* perspectives, angles, and vantage points.

Although you will specialize in one field (your college major), “real-life” issues and career challenges are not specialized into majors. For instance, such important issues as providing effective leadership, improving race relations, and reducing international conflict cannot be understood or solved by one single field of study. The approach of one specialized field provides a single-minded and often over-simplified explanation of, or solution to, complex issues. Similarly, the tasks that humans face in their personal lives and professional careers are also multi-dimensional, requiring perspectives and skills that go well beyond the boundaries of one particular field of study. The multiple subject areas that you are exposed to in the liberal arts provide you with these multiple perspectives and equip you with a wider repertoire of thinking tools to work on the tasks we face in our personal and professional lives.

Keep in mind that liberal arts courses don't just expose you to different subject areas; they also train your mind to think in different ways. This is why different academic subjects are often referred to as *disciplines*; by learning them, you begin to develop the “mental discipline” that faculty in these fields have spent years of their lives developing. For instance, when you study history, algebra, biology, and art, you are disciplining your mind to think in multiple ways—you are learning to think chronologically (history), symbolically (algebra), scientifically (biology), and creatively (art). The diverse fields comprising the liberal arts will empower you to think in a variety of ways. For example, different fields will require you to think:

l with words, numbers, or images,

l in specific parts or whole patterns,

l individually or globally,

l concretely or abstractly,

l systematically (in sequential steps) or intuitively (in sudden leaps),

l objectively or subjectively, and

l factually or imaginatively (Donald, 2002; Katz & Henry, 1993).

The different disciplines in the liberal arts will also train your mind to develop the habit of asking powerful questions. Some will be important fact-seeking and fact-finding questions, such as: Who? What? When? and Where? Others will be deeper questions designed to get beyond the facts and beneath the surface, such as: Why? Why not? How come? What if? The diversity of thinking and questioning styles you encounter in the liberal arts will provide you with a wide range of intellectual resources to draw from, and a large repository of thinking tools to use. This rich repertoire of mental skills you acquire will supply you with the intellectual curiosity, versatility, and agility needed to “think on your feet.”

The liberal arts will also enhance your creativity. The different thinking styles you develop will equip you with a wide range of strategies that may be adopted or adapted to solve problems you may encounter in a different contexts or situations. These diverse strategies can also be combined or rearranged in ways that result in unique and innovative solutions to problems. The ideas you acquire in separate subject areas of the liberal arts can complement one another and “cross-fertilize”--giving birth to novel Ideas and new approaches for solving old problems.

Yet Another advantage of liberal arts is that it can accelerate your learning curve, enabling you to learn new material more rapidly. Learning occurs when your brain makes a connection between the concept you're trying to learn and something you already know. The greater the number and variety of learned connections that your brain has already made, the more pathways it has to build on and connect new ideas to, which serves to facilitate and accelerate learning of new ideas.

Being a generalistis equally important for career success as being a specialist.

Studies show that college students (and their parents) are extremely concerned about what majors and careers. However, they often overlook or underestimate the importance of general education provided by the liberal arts (Hersh, 1994, 1997). As a result, liberal arts courses are sometimes seen as unnecessary requirements that students need to get out of the way before they can get into what is really important—their specialized major. This negative view probably stems from: (a) lack of knowledge about what the liberal arts stand for and what they're designed to do, and (b) misinterpretation of the meaning general education as referring to something that's "general" (not specific) and lacking any particular value or practical purpose. However, as is demonstrated repeatedly in chapter 2, the liberal arts involve development of very practical, durable, and transferable skills that serve as the foundation for success in all majors and all careers.

Research indicates that as an individual’s career progresses, specific skills learned in a major tend to decline in importance and are replaced by more general skills (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Specific, technical skills may be important for moving you into a career, but general, professional skills are more important for moving you up the career ladder. These are the skills that prevent you from getting stuck in a dead-end position and help you avoid the scenario of advancing to a position that you cannot perform successfully because it requires broader professional skills and responsibilities than were needed for success at lower-level positions.

The importance of general professional skills will become even more important for people entering the workforce during the twenty-first century because the demand for upper-level positions that involve management and leadership will exceed the supply of people in the workforce that are prepared to fill these positions (Herman, 2000). Many people see the career advantages of specializingin a particular field, but they often fail to see its potential disadvantage—overspecialization. There is an old saying that goes something like this: “A specialist is someone who knows more and more about less and less until he knows a whole lot about very little and isn’t interested in learning anything outside his specialty because then he wouldn’t be a specialist.” There's some truth to this old adage because when you are very narrowly trained, you're knowledge and skills are limited to one specific (specialized) position.

Furthermore, if changes in society create less demand for a certain specialized career, then your risk of unemployment is higher. You may end up preparing for a very specific career that will no longer be in demand (or may no longer exist) after you graduate.

Personal Experience

My father is a good example of someone whose education was too narrow and whose career was too specialized. He spent approximately two years of his life learning how to be a horologist—a specialist in watch and clock repair. He found regular employment until the 1980s, when advances in technology at that time made it possible for companies to produce and sell high-performance watches at a much cheaper price than ever before. As a result, instead of having their watches repaired when they began to malfunction, people simply threw them away and bought new ones. This reduced society’s need for watch repairmen, such as my father, who soon lost his position with the watch company he was working for and was eventually forced into early retirement.

—Joe Cuseo

Our society is undergoing rapid technological change and dramatic growth in knowledge. Existing jobs can become obsolete and unnecessary, while at the same time, entirely new positions get created that never existed before (Brown, 2003). Naturally, nobody is specifically trained or prepared to fill these new positions because no one knew they would come into existence. The growing number of such unanticipated positions is now creating a greater demand for generalists with a broad base of knowledge, flexible lifelong-learning skills, plus the mental versatility needed to take on changing job responsibilities and different professional roles (Niles & Harris-Bowlsbey, 2002; Herman, 2000).

The best way to prepare for such a changing future is by equipping yourself with durable, transferable skills—those timeless skills that always have been and always will be useful and that can be employed anywhere in any way. Certain specialized technological skills may be “hot” right now, but the specific technological skills needed for current technological tasks, such as word-processing programs and Web-page designs, will likely change considerably in the future. In contrast, the general education (liberal arts) skills of communication and creativity are likely to withstand the test of time and continue to remain in demand.

"The fixed person for the fixed duties, who in older societies was a blessing, in the future will be a public danger."

—Alfred North Whitehead, English mathematician and philosopher

**Remember:** Don’t look at general education as something to “get out of the way” so you can “get into” your major and career. Instead, look at it as something to get into and get ready to take away from general education those general, transferable skills that are *stable*—which will remain relevant during changing times, and that are *portable*—which you can take with you and use successfully to adapt to changing work situations and career roles.

Building your skills, broadening your perspectives, and keeping trackof your personal development in college is as important as earning credits, completing courses, and checking off degree requirements.

While completing assignments, getting good grades, and getting a degree are all important accomplishments, it's equally important to step back, reflect on, and keep track of what you're actually learning. More important than memorizing facts, figures, and formulas are the new skills you're acquiring and refining, the new perspectives and vantage points from which you are viewing things, and the different dimensions of your “self” that you are developing. Save the lists of specific skills, perspectives, and areas of self-development that have been identified in chapter 2 (and throughout the text), and use them as checklists to track of how many of them you are acquiring as you proceed through college.

It's important to make a conscious attempt to increase your awareness and memory of your developing skills and perspectives because their improvement can often be subtle and subconscious. Development of these powerful skills and perspectives often gets embedded within or buried below all the factual material you're focusing on while learning. Skills and perspectives are mental habits; like other habits that are repeatedly practiced, their growth can be so gradual that what we fail to notices how much personal growth has actually occurred.

**Remember:** Consciously keeping track of your areas of development can serve as a strength-recognition exercise that boosts your self-esteem and your motivation to continue learning. Furthermore, it’s an excellent way to sell yourself to potential employers, who are often more interested in what specific skills you have acquired and can bring with you to the job, rather than what courses you took or what major you completed.

Attending college is not just about earning a better living; it’s also about learning to live a better life.

Research shows that the primary reasons why students go to college are to “prepare for a career” and “get a better job” (Sax, et al., 2004). It's true that these are important reasons for attending college and that your career is an important element of your life. However, your vocation or occupation represents just one dimension of yourself, and it represents just one of many different roles and responsibilities you're likely to experience in life--such as family member, spouse, parent, friend, co-worker, and citizen.

**Remember:** Living a successful and rewarding life depends on your ability to fulfill multiple roles effectively. The broad-based knowledge, wide-ranging perspectives, and transferable skills developed by the liberal arts prepare you for the multiple life roles you’ll encounter throughout the course of your life.

Chapter 2

*Reading Objectives*

2.1 Recognize the meaning of the term, “*liberal arts*.” (p. 32)

2.2 Recognize the meaning of the term, *curriculum*. (p. 33)

2.3 Recall *three* *outside influences* that can exert excessive control over us, which a liberal arts

education helps us resist and empower us to be *self-directed* human beings. (p. 33)

2.4 Recognize what is meant by the term, *general education*. (p. 33)

2.5 Recognize the primary *questions* asked by the following divisions of knowledge within the

liberal arts curriculum:

(a) *Humanities*

(b) *Fine Arts*

(c) *Natural Sciences*

(d) *Social & Behavioral Sciences*. (pp. 34-36)

2.6 Recognize the primary *subject areas* that make up each of the following divisions of the

liberal arts curriculum:

(a) Humanities

(b) Fine Arts

(c) Natural Sciences

(d) Social & Behavioral Sciences. (pp. 34-36)

2.7 Recall the meaning of the following characteristics of *liberal arts skills*:

(a) *transferability*

(b) *durability*. (p. 37)

2.8 Recall *three* key skills provided by a liberal arts education that are highly valued by

*employers*. (p. 39)

2.9 Recall *three* key *elements of the self* that are important dimensions of *holistic* development

(development of the “whole person”). (pp. 40-41)

2.10 Recognize what the term, *co-curriculum* refers to. (p. 44)

2.11 Recall *two* key components or ways in which a liberal arts education *broadens* your

perspective of the world. (p. 46)

2.12 Recall what each of the following perspectives (developed by a liberal arts education)

involves or embraces:

(a) *cultural* perspective

(b) *global* perspective (pp. 48-49).

2.13 Recall why the authors argue that “a liberal arts education not only prepares you for a career;

it also prepares you for life.” (p. 51)

Chapter 2

*Short Essay Questions*

(Linked to specific reading objectives)

1. A liberal arts education is designed to help you become a *self-directed* person who can think

independently and resist outside influences that attempt to manipulate or control our thinking.

Briefly describe *three* *outside influences* from which a liberal arts education “liberates” you

from excessive dependence or control.

[Reading objective: 2.3; Answer: p. 33]

2. One way in which the liberal arts provides you with a foundation for lifelong success is by

equipping you with a set of skills that have two powerful qualities: (a) *transferability* and (b)

*durability*. Briefly describe what these skill qualities are and why they are so powerful.

[Reading objective: 2.7; Answer: p. 37]

3. Research on the work skills sought by employers indicates that they are strikingly similar to the

skills developed by a liberal arts education. Briefly describe *three* key types or categories of

*skills* sought by *employers* that college students develop as part of a *liberal arts education*.

[Reading objective; 2.8; Answer: pp. 38-39)

4. One of the major goals of a liberal arts education is to promote *holistic* *development*. Briefly

describe what is meant by the term, “*holistic* development” and briefly describe *three* *elements*

*or dimensions* of it.

[Reading objective: 2.9; Answer: p. 41]

5. One major goal of a liberal arts education is that it can help us step outside ourselves and

broaden our perspective of the world around us. Briefly describe *two components or ways*

in which a liberal arts education *broadens our world perspective*.

[Reading objective: 2.11; Answer: p. 46]

6. Two broadening perspectives developed by a liberal arts education are (a) a *cultural*

perspective and (b) a *global* perspective. Describe what each of these two perspectives

involves or embraces.

[Reading objective: 2.12; Answer: pp. 48-49]

7. Explain how a liberal arts education helps you put into practice the following statement:

“Going to college isn’t just about you earning a better living; it’s about learning to live a better

life.”

[Reading objective: 2.13; Answer: p. 51]

# *True-False* & *Multiple-Choice* Questions

(Linked to specific reading objectives)

1. Which one of the following statements represents the most accurate meaning of the term:

*“liberal arts”* education?

(a) Learning to be less conservative politically.

(b) Learning to spend money freely.

(c) Learning to value the art of peace rather than the martial arts.

(d) Learning how to become a performing artist.

(e) Learning skills for freedom.

[Reading objective: 2.1; Answer: (e), p. 32]

2. The term *curriculum* refers to a collection of:

(a) extra-curricular activities

(b) work experiences

(c) volunteer experiences

(d) courses

(e) stamps.

[Reading objective: 2.10; Answer: (d), p. 33)

3. If you happen to overhear two professors talking about the *general education* curriculum, they are talking about the *liberal arts* curriculum.

(a) True

(b) False.

[Reading objective: 2.4; Answer: (a), p. 33]

4. Which one of the following liberal arts disciplines places the greatest emphasis on the question:

“How do humans express and appreciate what is *beautiful*?”

(a) Natural Sciences

(b) Humanities

(c) Behavioral & Social Sciences

(d) Fine Arts.

[Reading objective: 2.5(b); Answer: (d), p. 35]

5. Which one of the following liberal arts disciplines places the greatest emphasis on the question:

“How can humans predict and control their *physical world* and their interaction with it?”

(a) Natural Sciences

(b) Humanities

(c) Behavioral & Social Sciences

(d) Fine Arts.

[Reading objective: 2.5(c) Answer: (a), p. 35]

6. Which one of the following divisions of the liberal arts curriculum places the greatest emphasis

on the question: “What *causes* humans to behave the way they do?”

(a) Humanities

(b) Fine Arts

(c) Natural Sciences

(d) Behavioral & Social Sciences

(e) Scientology.

[Reading objective: 2.5(d); Answer: (d), p. 36]

7. Which one of the following divisions of the liberal arts curriculum places the greatest emphasis on the questions: “*Why*are we here?” and “*How* should we live our lives?”

(a) Natural Sciences

(b) Humanities

(c) Behavioral & Social Sciences

(d) Fine Arts

(e) Culinary Arts.

[Reading objective: 2.5(a); Answer: (b), p. 42]

8. [Student’s name] has decided to transfer to Disco Tech University, where she plans to major in

*Music* and minor in *Art*(because she just loves to be “creative,” “express herself,” and do her

“own thing.”) In which one of the following liberal arts disciplines has \_\_\_\_\_ decided to major

and minor?

(a) Humanities

(b) Fine Arts

(c) Natural Sciences

(d) Behavioral & Social Sciences

(e) Saturday Night Fever.

[Reading objective: 2.6(b); Answer: (b), p. 35]

9. Which one of the following subject areas is *not* housed within the *Natural Sciences* division of

the liberal arts curriculum?

(a) Biology

(b) Sociology

(c) Physics

(d) Chemistry

(e) Geology.

[Reading objective: 2.6(d); Answer: (b), pp. 35-36]

10. [Student’s name] is a lover of wisdom (among other things), so he has decided to take

*Philosophy* next semester to fulfill a general education requirement and also to see if he might

major in this subject. Which one of the following liberal arts disciplines reflects \_\_\_\_\_’s

possible major and career interests?

(a) Humanities

(b) Fine Arts

(c) Behavioral & Social Sciences

(d) Natural Sciences

(e) Artificial Sciences

[Reading objective: 2.6(a); Answer: (a), p. 35]

11. [Student’s name] is going to take a *Psychology* course next year to complete a general

education requirement and test his interest in pursuing a career as a psychotherapist (heaven

help us!). By taking such a course, \_\_\_\_\_ would fulfill a requirement in which one of the

following liberal arts divisions?

(a) Humanities

(b) Fine Arts

(c) Natural Sciences

(d) Behavioral & Social Sciences

(e) Freudology.

[Reading objective: 2.6(d); Answer: (d), p. 36]

12. The *co-curriculum* refers to the required academic courses that students take for general

education.

(a) True

(b) False.

[Reading objective; 2.10; Answer: (b), p. 44]

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Reading Objectives for Additional Material Excised from the

*First Edition* of the Text

#1. Recall two ways in which the liberal arts provide you with skills that provide a relevant

foundation for success in any college major or professional career.

#2. Recall how the liberal arts can enhance your *creativity* in any field.

#3. Recall why being a *generalist* is as important for career success as being a specialist.

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Test Questions for Additional Material Excised from the *First Edition* of the Text

1. In our current era of exploding technology and increasing globalization, today’s college

graduates are likely to enter career positions that have never existed before, and are likely to

change career positions multiple times before retiring. Describe *two* ways in which the liberal

arts component of a your college education provide you with *skills for success in* *any career*

you may assume after graduation.

[Reading objective #1.]

2. Success in college (and beyond) depends not only the ability to think critically but also on the ability to think *creatively*. Briefly describe how a liberal arts education can enhance your

*creativity* in any academic major or career field.

[Reading objective: #2.]

3. When college students are asked about their future plans, the conversation typically centers

around what they’re going to specialize in—for example, what field of study they’re going to

major in or what particular career they’re going to pursue. However, research suggests that

being a generalist is as important for career success as being a specialist. Briefly explain why or

how being a *generalist* is as important as being a specialist for success in today’s work world.

[Reading objective: #3.]