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School for New Learning

A NON-TRADITIONAL ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING

THE SCHOOL FOR NEW LEARNING'S UNIFIED APPROACH TO LEARNING AND LIFE

Final Report
submitted to the
Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Institutions

Project Directors: Howard A. Sulkin and Marilyn J. Stocker

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INTRODUCTION

For the last two years, DePaul University's School for New Learning has been funded by the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE) to articulate, refine and evaluate a competency-based framework for adult learners. The result--an unusual GENERALIST approach to competence--provides the conceptual underpinnings for the now fully realized school.

Rather than dwell on a demographic evaluation report (although statistical information is available), the Project Directors have chosen to present the philosophy, principles and processes which shape this new definition of a B.A. degree.

Central to the School's design is that it provide an environment which is learner-centered. Thus, it has been exciting to discover in the course of this project an historical foundation for key ideas in this program--the roots of the School's non-traditional approach to unifying learning and life. These ideas will be presented in the following paper. Documents produced for the development of the entire program (which was never seen as distinct from the funded project) are appended.

In September 1972, DePaul University created the School for New Learning (SNL). Though it was at the time only a commitment, within the following year the School developed the major features which now distinguish it as one of the nation's most innovative degree programs (see "Overview" - Appendix A). The School for New Learning is a baccalaureate college for adults aged twenty-four years or older. Its program is competence-based and features contract learning plus the evaluation of learning acquired through life experience. In addition, the School shares with other non-traditional programs a restructuring of time, place, and course requirements so that adult students may participate fully, but at their own pace.

The School's founders, Dr. Howard A. Sulkin and Marilyn J. Stocker, began the planning for the School with a set of assumptions that has both shaped the School and provided its continued vitality. Among those starting assumptions were the following:¹

The School should develop the whole person, including skills and attitudes as well as knowledge.

Student growth should be recognized in terms of competence rather than in terms of course accumulation.

Students should be able to receive "credit" for appropriate learning gained through prior experiences, regardless of the nature or timing of those experiences.

The School should equip adults to engage in constructive, self-directed lifelong learning.

Students should bear the major responsibility and authority for designing and completing their own degree programs.

The School should provide appropriate counselling and other support services so that students may exercise their academic responsibilities fully and efficiently.

The School should de-emphasize administrative rigidities and emphasize flexible scheduling.

The School should avoid duplication and competition with other postsecondary institutions and, instead, act in cooperation with them to serve jointly the needs of adult students.

Guided by these principles, the original staff developed over the ensuing several years a highly innovative program which is successfully serving the needs of adult learners in the Chicago metropolitan area.

The major features of the program were developed not only as an outgrowth of these assumptions, but also in response to the particular needs and characteristics of the students who came to enroll in the program. More than half of the students were beyond age 35. More than one-fifth of the students were Blacks or Spanish-Americans. Nearly three-quarters were married. Over 90 percent had some previous college education, mostly in junior colleges and approximately the same percentage wanted the degree in order to go to graduate school or to advance in the world of work.² In addition to bearing these non-traditional characteristics, students also differed widely in their capacities for responding to the demands of a student-centered program. Many of the students possessed only marginal academic skills. A majority needed help in clarifying their educational and/or career goals. Others who were returning to college after a long absence or who were attending for the first time needed personal counselling to boost their confidence and help them get started.

The School has responded to these diverse needs by establishing a series of workshops and seminars in which every degree-seeking student must participate. All of these workshops are small-group sessions in which students receive general instruction and personalized assistance. This process is designed to help students to clarify their educational goals.

For the student who hopes to matriculate at the School for New Learning, the first formal point of contact is the Discovery Workshop (see Appendix B).³ This three-day session is a mandatory initial step in the admissions process of the School. The Workshop, which meets on weekends, is a small-group session in which SNL professionals and other visiting staff help prospective students to define their career and educational goals. Through a series of oral and written exercises adults are trained to evaluate their own strengths and weaknesses, to develop clear educational goals and to work out creative answers to problems they may face in returning to school. Students are informed about the School as well as about other non-traditional options within the Chicago area and are required to evaluate the School as only one of many alternatives. The Workshop culminates with private counselling sessions between individual students and SNL staff members. As of June 30, 1976, almost 1,100 adults had attended these Workshops.

One relatively unique aspect of the Discovery Workshop, and of all counselling at SNL, is the School's emphasis upon "alternatives counselling" (educational brokering). The School has consistently taken the position that not all adults are suitable candidates for its demanding and relatively unstructured program. All adults who wish to enter the School as degree candidates must meet four criteria.* The School takes the position that prospective students who fail to meet these criteria should be counselled away from the program and into more appropriate educational institutions in the Chicago area. This approach permeates not only the counselling which occurs during the Discovery Workshop (before adults have applied to SNL), but also the advisement which is available during various stages of the SNL degree program. More than sixty percent of all adults who attend Discovery Workshops eventually choose to attend another Chicago-area education institution. SNL looks upon this fact with pride.

*Criteria include studentship, independence, maturity and flexibility.

For the adult who has completed a Discovery Workshop and wishes to enter the School's degree program, the next step is the completion of the application form, which includes an autobiography and copies of transcripts from all colleges previously attended.

Students who are accepted into the program then enroll in Life Experience Evaluation. This learning experience begins with a Portfolio Preparation Workshop which is designed to help students develop self-evaluation skills as they prepare a portfolio of evidences concerning their prior learning. Prior learning in this context includes both formal and informal learning. Since SNL's degree is awarded on the basis of competences rather than on the basis of accumulated courses, it is necessary for students and SNL evaluators to link all types of learning, including coursework, to the appropriate competence statements. In the Portfolio Preparation Workshop much attention is given to clarifying the meaning of the competence statements and to indicating the types of evidence that may be used to document learning in each area. Through written and oral instruction, small-group discussions, workbook exercises, and private counselling, students are shown how to best prepare a portfolio. A "Life Experience Handbook" (see Appendix C) describes the general criteria that are used for evaluating prior learning, discusses the manner in which specific types of evidences should be acquired and submitted, and presents some guidelines for constructing a complete and coherent portfolio.

Once they have attended the Portfolio Preparation Workshop, students compile their portfolios. Included within the finished portfolio are transcripts, letters of testimony, artifacts, papers, course syllabi, test scores, diplomas, certificates and awards, personal statements, and other evidences, each arranged in such a way that it corresponds to the specified competences which comprise the SNL framework.

When a portfolio is completed by a student, it is submitted to SNL's evaluation staff. The portfolio is then evaluated by SNL staff members. The student is then ready to enroll in the next stage of the program, Learning Pact Negotiation, a learning experience which involves both the formation of a committee that will specify the student's future curriculum at SNL and the drafting of his or her learning contract. Students learn how to design an individualized program by participating in the Program Design Seminar, a small-group experience.

The student's committee is composed of five roles: (1) an academic mentor, who serves as a subject specialist in the student's primary area of interest; (2) a community resource advisor, who is someone employed in the student's primary field of interest; (3) a peer, who is any friend or other advocate chosen by the student (optional); (4) a member of the School's professional staff; and, most importantly, (5) the student. This committee negotiates the various learning strategies which the student will use to acquire the competences that remain unfulfilled after Life Experience Evaluation. Specific plans are drawn up for acquiring each competence. These plans may include, but are not restricted to, coursework at DePaul and other area institutions, independent projects, on-the-job training, volunteer work, and specially designed projects. Once these plans have been settled, a formal learning pact is signed by all parties. The pact includes statements of the competences to be fulfilled, the methods by which they will be acquired, and the manner in which learning will be evaluated.

All students must enroll in at least three SNL competence-based courses and one Major Seminar. The purpose of the course requirement is to assure that each student is exposed to competence-based instruction, which is goal-oriented and interdisciplinary. The Major Seminar is intended to assist students in their pursuit of advanced study within the competence framework. Its function is to provide a disciplinary focus for students nearing completion of the program.

There are two other mandatory activities: Internship and Major Piece of Work. The Internship is a field experience exercise in which the student is required to apply his competence in a practical setting. The Major Piece of Work is an advanced learning experience aimed at demonstrating the student's ability to attain excellence in planning, completing and evaluating an independent and in-depth piece of work.

When students have completed all learning experiences in the Pact, and have had their work reviewed by SNL's summative Final Evaluation Committee, the student is ready for the last stage of the School, the Summit Seminar. This small-group session is a parallel to the Discovery Workshop. Students preparing to graduate evaluate their learning experiences at the School and their own development over time. In addition, students prepare a narrative statement which becomes part of their official non-traditional transcript and they address the issue of how to present their unique learning experiences to prospective employers and graduate schools. In small groups students reassess their short and long range educational and life goals and plan learning strategies for continuing self-development.

This is the dynamic process each student must experience if he or she wishes to obtain a Bachelor's degree from the School for New Learning. Being superimposed upon much course-work and independent learning, this set of requirements is both non-traditional and highly demanding. It is designed to serve adult students who are independent, goal-oriented, and strongly motivated. For the more than fifty graduates who have completed the program it has proven to be a richly rewarding experience.

A Unified Approach to Learning and Life: The Roots of SNL's Approach

In the rich traditions of Western educational history no one has been more thoroughly in advance of his time or more in favor of a unified approach to learning and life than the Moravian educator, Johann Amos Comenius whose his educational theories have been persistently and unjustly overlooked by American educators. The unfortunate aspect of this is that in the theories of Comenius may be found the deep roots of what in American higher education is now termed the "non-traditional" movement. In a parallel manner the roots of the "traditional" may be found in the theories and practices which Comenius opposed.

Moreover, in the heated intellectual battles of Comenius' time may be found the forerunners of many of the same confrontations which face educational reformers in the present day. The purpose of this section is to illuminate how the educational insights of an earlier period may shed light upon contemporary efforts to integrate learning and life, closing with a consideration of the manner in which DePaul University's School for New Learning has incorporated some of these advanced educational principles.⁴

In 1641, Comenius, a refugee Czech teacher and bishop, having distinguished himself as one of the world's foremost educational theorists, was called to London to help found a school of "New Learning". On virtually all counts Comenius was a stimulating theorist. He was acquainted with all previous writers in education. The central tenet of his work was that learning and life are inseparable.

Comenius' pedagogical views were remarkably "modern". For instance, he advocated equality of education for both males and females -- an unheard-of stance in his time. He urged universal schooling at a time when only the sons of gentry and wealthy merchants received much attention. He also argued for drastic changes in pedagogical methods. Teachers, he said, should abandon their reliance on rote memorization and relax what one later authority called the "constant and inexorable pressure of discipline". Furthermore, he encouraged the introduction of practical exercises which would engage the full range of students' abilities. Unlike the Jesuits' rigid *Ratio Studiorum*, Comenius' curriculum called for the development of each individual to "full humanity", by which he meant more than mere intellectual prowess.

Comenius also drew attention to two psychological facts which seemed to be flagrantly ignored in his time. First, he recognized the existence of individual differences in abilities and the importance of modifying teaching methods accordingly. "There is," he wrote, "as great a difference between the minds of men as exists between the various kinds of plants, of trees, or of animals; one must be treated in one way, and another in another, and the same method cannot be applied to all alike."⁴

The second psychological factor recognized by Comenius was that of individual "readiness". Readiness to learn, in his view, differed from person to person and was partially a function of individual aptitude, partially a function of personal interest, and partially a function of the relevance of the curriculum to the general needs of the time. Regarding the first two factors there was little recourse for instructors except to take into account individual differences and to attempt to stimulate new interests whenever possible.

In place of the prevailing methods he urged the adoption of an approach in which it would be "sufficient if the wide classes that exist in nature, with their most important and most essential divisions, be made thoroughly clear. More specialized knowledge can easily be acquired later, as the opportunity arises."⁴

Comenius was highly critical of collegiate education. His chief complaint about existing university teaching was that it failed to show the wholeness of knowledge. Comenius criticized the traditional approach for being "not enough accommodated to the uses of life."⁴ He recognized that scholars with professional ambitions needed to pursue detailed knowledge, but he argued simultaneously against scholasticism and for the view that everyone should "bear in mind both the general aim of the entire education of man as well as the particular and proper aim of his profession."⁴

This attention to the wholeness of knowledge and to the accomodation of learning to the uses of life he termed "pansophism". Comenius believed in the essential unity of all knowledge; he believed in the unity of all mankind; and he believed in the unity of learning and life.

In his numerous writings, Comenius describes the major features that would characterize a collegiate institution of pansophic design. As will be noted, many of these features are the same ones which nowadays are promoted as "non-traditional". His pansophic dream is still the dream of many progressive American educators. Reduced to its barest essentials, Comenius' pansophic theory of education may be summarized in the following five propositions:

1. All men and women should be educated to full humanity, limited only by differences in capacity and interest.
2. All fields of knowledge and expertise are integrally related and may, when shorn of most details, be taught through attention to common principles and methods.
3. All that is learned should be for use in life.
4. All that is learned should be learned through individual practice.
5. All that is taught should be taught syncretically, that is, in an interactive and concentric manner.

In the present day, attention to individual differences has been accentuated by improvements in psychological testing and by demands for equality with cultural pluralism. A heady sense of individual freedom also permeates the contemporary world, with students and professors each making demands for highly individualized learning opportunities. In Comenius' day attention to individual differences was unheard of. The Ratio Studiorum, which was the epitome of current teaching methods, emphasized uniform and unrelenting discipline, both mental and moral. The basic method did not vary, only its degree of application. For some inexplicable reason it has taken nearly three centuries to rediscover Comenius' insights concerning the inadequacies of this approach.

Comenius' tenet, that all that is learned should be for use in life, reveals a practicality about the purposes of education that seems refreshing even today. Comenius correctly perceived that the application of knowledge to action was not a simple matter. He further concluded that individual people could best pursue human goals by having a perspective that included all major divisions of knowledge. He saw the attainment of this perspective as a practical matter. People who specialize in detailed study were, in his judgement, unlikely to perform as fully-functioning members of society. He wrote:

That all things should be taken as a whole and not piecemeal and partially, now this, now that, is shown by this very true thought, and the experience with which it is linked: that if the force of human nature is directed entirely towards one sole point, and not to the whole theatre of things, it cannot preserve a harmonious balance but oversteps the limits to a harmful degree, to the certain prejudice of itself, things, and other men. For if all the desires of man are not taken for fulfillment together, that they may be

tempered, mutually complementing and connecting each other, then some will busy themselves only with things which can be known, others only with things which can be willed, and yet others only with things which can be performed; all the other things they will neglect and be disgusted by. Then when they are too full and swollen with this piecemeal business, they find... an overabundance of superfluous things, and... a lack of necessary things.⁴

Comenius also urged that university instructors should modify their teaching methods by broadening of the curriculum to include pansophic instruction as well a specialized instruction. He also encouraged the use of abridgements and summaries in place of whole tomes. He asked professors to suggest supplementary readings to students so that they might study in private. He argued for open discussion in classrooms, subject to the supervision of the instructor. He also saw merit in the holding of public debates on social issues. In addition, he suggested that academic degrees should not be awarded merely on the basis of successful disputations, but rather on the basis of an intensive summative examination that would test both academic and practical competence.

Through all levels of learning Comenius urged that every possible opportunity be provided for involving the student in action. At the adult level it might include internships, public debates, avocational craftsmanship, practical problem-solving and other similar experiences. In the view of Comenius, as well as in the views of some modern educators, this attention to experiential learning, whether structured or unstructured, is sound educational policy. It stimulates and retains interest, provides a range and depth of competence seldom provided by academic exercises alone, and induces a sense of personal mastery that pervades subsequent learning and practice.

Tying together the experiences of all stages of life are two fundamental principles: the continuity of the person and the unity of knowledge. In the best of circumstances each learning experience leads the learner from the familiar to the unfamiliar in such a way that what is learned first will be fixed or modified by what is learned subsequently. Comenius maintained the view that throughout life the observant and self-critical individual would discover the same relationships, aims, and methods appearing over and over. This was guaranteed by the essential unity of all knowledge and expertise.

Without too much distortion it is possible to represent graphically this unity of learning. If the individual person is pictured as the hub of a wheel and the sum of knowledge and expertise as the circumference, then the spokes are the interactions. The spokes may represent individual experiences or they may represent disciplinary divisions of the pursuit of knowledge. In either case they are linked to each other at both ends. At the center they are linked by the individual learner and at the periphery they are linked by the inter-connectedness of truth. Comenius' insight with respect to this model is that good teaching moves the learner progressively farther out along the spokes during the fullness of his lifetime, not overstressing any one set of spokes. Neither the physical wheel nor the wheel of life rolls very smoothly when it is out of balance. Comenius perceived this fact and emphasized a concentric and interactive mode of teaching that would provide balanced learning. "It may be laid down as a general rule," he wrote, "that each subject should be taught in combination with those which are correlative to it..."⁴ Only by this method, he said, can the vital and reciprocal relationships of different strata of reality be experienced by the learner.

In Comenius' pansophic theory of education, the basis of unity is the integral relationship of all knowledge, but the focus of his pedagogy is the individual person; in this respect as in so many others Comenius is thoroughly modern. In spite of the fact that Comenius' views have played little part in the historical development of American higher education, it will be shown that some of his insights carry considerable contemporary relevance.

The major thrusts of Comenius' pedagogical methodology may be summarized in the last two propositions earlier mentioned, namely that all which is learned should be learned through individual practice and that all which is taught should be taught syncretically. Both of these principles reflect psychological insights later expressed more fully and precisely by Maria Montessori, John Dewey, and Jerome Bruner, to name but a few.

The Minimum Indispensables

For the vast majority of those who begin an undergraduate program, there may never be another occasion to engage in sustained intellectual activity. This is especially likely to be so for the "new students" who are attending colleges in ever increasing numbers: the poor, the minorities, the middle-aged.

In recent years enlightened educators have become increasingly aware of the need to fashion a student-centered curriculum, and on many campuses additional support services have been provided to accommodate the special needs of diverse individuals. Additional courses have been added to the curricular mix. Liberal scholarship provisions help to assure that students of all backgrounds can pick freely among the alternatives for which they are or might become qualified. More doors are opening nearly every day. However, learners may have more options to choose from but no greater understanding of how they should make those choices or even whether any of the choices are worthwhile in an enduring sense. It is, of course, appropriate to ask what the colleges might do in order to encourage integrated learning at the undergraduate level.

If attempts to stimulate integrated learning are to succeed, they must focus on the student who learns rather than on the learning of the student. This is not an artificial distinction. The first approach asks "What is the nature of the student?", while the second approach asks "What is the nature of knowledge?" These basic questions represent fundamentally different starting points.

Among the phrases currently in vogue in American higher education, one that occurs quite often is that of "learner-centered reform". It would seem if one is to believe the educational literature, that efforts to focus on the learner are well on their way to fulfillment. The main thrust of these efforts seems to be the provision of virtually limitless opportunities for learning, as is indicated by the title of the Commission on Non-Traditional Study's book, Diversity by Design. In the preface to that work the Commission's chairman, Samuel B. Gould, summarized the learned-centered attitude in a statement that probably has been quoted more often than any other statement in recent educational literature. He wrote:

This attitude puts the student first and the institution second, concentrates more on the former's need than the latter's convenience, encourages diversity of individual opportunity rather than uniform prescription and deemphasizes time and space and even course requirements in favor of competence and, where applicable, performance.⁵

Two of the goals which underlie this statement are the desire to build greater flexibility into educational systems at all levels, and the desire to open the resources of teaching institutions to all segments of society. In some institutions reforms that appear to be learner-centered are not much more than thinly disguised attempts to broaden the marketability of preexisting curricula. In these institutions, innovative programming does not serve the individual student, except in superficial ways, as effectively as it serves the host program by bolstering enrollment and fostering an aura of innovation.

Experientially-based curricula tend to increase students' sense of the unity of learning and life, but even programs which rely heavily upon experiential learning tend to maintain a fragmented approach to the domain of knowledge itself, preferring to work within customary disciplinary boundaries. The structuring, evaluation, and crediting of experiential learning thus tends to be in terms of traditional criteria and these criteria are based more on assumptions concerning the nature of knowledge than on assumptions concerning the nature of the learner.

This last distinction is absolutely critical to a full understanding of the concept of learner-centered reform. Learner-centered reform goes beyond the scheduling and organization of learning experiences which are convenient and which meet students at their individual levels of ability, interest, and readiness. Learner-centered reform is concerned with the effect that such learning experiences have on the development of the whole person.

The method which seems most likely to produce effective learner-centered reform in American undergraduate education is one which focuses upon what Sidney Hook has termed "the minimum indispensables".⁶ The "minimum indispensables" are those skills, attitudes, beliefs, habits, and areas of knowledge which constitute an acceptable level of human competence.

"Minimum indispensables" are fundamental components of human competence. They include such traditional academic skills as advanced literacy. They include the ability to engage in academic research. They also include the skills and attitudes necessary for individuals to confront situations for which the appropriate response is not to begin with a review of the literature. The "minimum indispensables" are none other than the components of the art of living wisely. Acquaintance with certain areas of knowledge is a necessary but insufficient component. Non-cognitive components must also be included, such as attitudinal and aesthetic qualities. The ability to judge normative issues is an important aspect of life and should be developed as one of the "minimum indispensables". Interpersonal skills are another appropriate area for inclusion in a learner-centered curriculum, and there are still others.

It is these life-related principles which form the nucleus of a learner-centered curriculum. As Comenius long ago concluded, there are relationships and principles which link knowledge to life and which link areas of knowledge to one another. It is these principles which emerge from reflection upon the experiences of life and it is these principles which guide people's subsequent behavior. "Education," wrote Alfred North Whitehead, "is the guidance of the individual towards a comprehension of the art of life: and by the art of life I mean the most complete achievement of varied activity expressing the potentialities of that living creature in the face of its actual living environment." The "minimum indispensables" are those areas of human competence which allow each individual to function in this manner. There will be necessary variations among individuals to allow for differences in abilities and goals, but on the whole it would seem that there are more similarities than difference in the determination of appropriate curricular components. To the extent that human competence can be developed it is the task of learner-centered curricula to do so.

This is a fresh approach to learning and is seldom seen in American higher education, but it has roots that stretch back to the writings of Comenius. At that time the "New Learning" was fledgling science; today the "New Learning" tends to be in the domains of personal development and social science. But the more enduring issue remains: how does one take a unified approach to learning and life? Today, when knowledge has become so vast as to be unmanageable, it is no longer possible, if indeed it ever was, to achieve unity at the periphery, among disciplinary domains. Instead it would seem that whatever unity may be achieved in undergraduate curricula will come through learner-centered reforms that attempt to develop the "minimum indispensables" of human competence. Comenius was entirely correct when he said that the one necessary thing in education and in life is "that man should know himself, should master himself, and employ his faculties usefully." The emphasis upon self was appropriate both then and now and, happily, seems to be the basis of the non-traditional movement at its best.

DePaul University's School for New Learning: Unifying Life and Learning.

DePaul's School for New Learning is one of a small number of programs that attempts to define and develop the "minimum indispensables" of human competence, and is one of a limited but growing number of programs that takes a unified approach to learning and life. 8

The degree program of the School for New Learning is thoroughly learner-centered. Recognizing that adult learners possess levels of independence, maturity, and flexibility uncommon among younger students, the School has created a program which requires that students assume a major burden of educational design. Students are responsible for setting their own educational goals, for selecting or designing learning experiences which promise to fulfill those goals, for providing appropriate evidences of learning, for integrating the School's minimum requirements with their own objectives, and for setting their own pace of progress through the various stages of the program. The emphasis of the School is upon self-directed learning.

One example of a learner-centered approach is the set of counselling and support experiences offered by the School. Though the review of seminars and workshops found in the opening section necessarily has been brief, it should be clear that the School attempts to provide supportive guidance at every important juncture of the program, beginning even before students are admitted. The rationale which underlies these group sessions is that it is better to offer help to students before they falter rather than after. Such assistance promotes efficient planning by students, reduces failure, and increases their sense of self-confidence.

Group workshops and seminars also help to build a sense of community among students and staff. Since all students and staff members are adults who commute considerable distances from their homes, it is important that the School provides opportunities for the development of a common bond among members of the learning community. In a personalized program such as this one, the development of interpersonal linkages is highly important, for across such linkages must flow information, advice, and the psychological support that can only flourish in a friendly environment.

The goal of the School is that each student will become an effective self-directed learner able to make appropriate educational choices. In aid of this goal, the School has incorporated additional learner-centered features. Among the other learner-centered features, perhaps the most prominent is the School's competence-based curriculum. This curriculum is designed to complement rather than to compete with existing departmental offerings at DePaul. The School's courses are competence-based, interdisciplinary, and tend to focus on themes which are of particular interest to adults.

Another major feature of the School is its emphasis upon awarding credit for learning that was acquired prior to or apart from formal collegiate instruction. Learning is considered to be valid regardless of its source, provided that the student can submit reliable evidence that something actually was learned and that the learning is relevant and of suitable quality. The School does not formally recognize all learning, but only that learning which, with college-level quality, meets the School's and the student's objectives. All evidences of learning are evaluated in terms of the School's competence framework as modified by each student's particular educational and career objectives.

The School's program components have been modified continuously to reflect changes in students' needs or in the School's perception of those needs. There has been confusion and frustration at times, but also renewal and growth. When a new procedure or offering is seen to be deficient, modifications are introduced; the history of the School has been one of adaptation. The adaptation, however, has been evolutionary. Thus, for example, when it was observed that students had difficulty in preparing Learning Pacts, the School introduced the Program Design Seminar to assist them. This program component was developed in response to the needs of participants.

This modification, typical of so many others, reflects the School's ongoing commitment to serve the ever-changing needs of students in a manner that is appropriate to their abilities, interests, and objectives. During the School's first years it has been found that incoming students differed in some respects from those who were sought or expected. The actual students have tended to be more goal-oriented, less sure of their learning objectives, weaker in basic academic skills, and more dependent upon guidance than had been expected. Over the life of the program additional shifts have been observed, such as the tendency of recent students to bring with them more previous college experience than earlier students had. To these and other unexpected trends the School has responded by modifying the program in ways that help such students to succeed.

The School is mindful of the needs of its adult population in other ways as well. Times, places, and administrative procedures are purposefully flexible so that students may pursue their self-set goals with a minimum of inconvenience. The School's courses, for instance, are located at three locations, including one in the suburbs, and most classes are held in the evenings or on weekends. Students who for some reason cannot attend one of the School's scheduled courses are encouraged to undertake an independent study with an appropriate faculty member or to enroll in a similar course at another convenient institution, which many do.

John Dewey long ago pointed out that education should have three reference points: the student's nature and needs, the society's nature and needs, and the characteristics of the subjects to be studied. The School for New Learning attempts to embody all of these reference points in its "minimum indispensable". In the construction of a generic competence framework the School consistently has sought to achieve a level of specificity that will insure quality and comprehensiveness without undercutting flexibility.

The School publicly proclaims its commitment to develop a program which effectively bridges the artificial gaps that have separated learning from life, academia from the "real world". In its overall program design, in its provisions for group and individual advisement, in its emphasis upon forward-looking and integrative competence, and in so many other respects, the School exhibits its unified approach to learning and life. The School's position is that learning and living should advance hand in hand, the fruits of one enriching the other. As an educational stance this position has proven to be highly fruitful, leading to the design of an adult degree program that is thoroughly in accord with DePaul's Catholic and urban heritage.

Focus on Competence

The promotion of competence-based education became a central concern of the Non-Traditional Movement during the late sixties and early seventies. Gaining currency first in the field of teacher education, the idea quickly assumed a prominent role in discussions concerning the reform of general undergraduate education. Spurred by seed money from governmental agencies and several prestigious foundations, a growing number of colleges and universities adopted curricular reforms that were wholly or partially based upon the assumption that human competence(s) can be defined, taught or induced, and assessed. DePaul's School for New Learning is one of these institutions. Indeed, it is one of the relatively few institutions whose full program is competence-based.

As a by-product of the growth of competence-based undergraduate education, there has appeared a large and ever-increasing literature extolling its virtues, criticizing its faults, and describing proposed or actual programs. Unfortunately, the overwhelming bulk of this outpouring has lacked a clear conceptual basis. Considerably more attention has been paid to the mechanics of implementing a competence-based program and to debating its alleged advantages and disadvantages than to developing a sound theoretical underpinning for its various features. This deficiency now is being felt throughout the educational realm. Now that the novelty of competence-based curricula has waned and the support from external agencies has receded, it is more apparent than before that the competence-based movement lacks conceptual clarity and unity. The elements of a comprehensive theory lie about the educational landscape, and some integrative work has been done, but the main task of giving definition to competence-based programming remains ahead.

This section will address itself to a consideration of the conceptual underpinnings of the competence model used by the School for New Learning. The first part will define the notion of competence and distinguish competence-based educational designs from other designs which are in some respects similar. The second part will examine aspects of the assessment of competence, including the inferential nature of such assessment and the types of criteria, evidences, and methods which this entails. The final part will address issues of implementation, including both the rationales for adopting a competence model and the methods used to implement it.

Competence Defined

At the School for New Learning the term "competence" is used in two senses, one general and one technical. The general meaning refers to the notion that there is a basic cluster of generic capacities which adults need in order to "survive and thrive" in modern society. Among such generic capacities are certain fundamental skills, attitudes, and areas of knowledge. The person who has sufficiently developed this range of capacities is said by the School to be "competent." The technical use of the term "competence" refers to the individual skills, attitudes and bodies of knowledge which the School has identified as appropriate to the Bachelor's degree level of learning. In this sense a competence is a skill, an attitude, or one domain of knowledge. On the basis of this distinction it is possible for

students to be judged "competent" in selected areas yet "not competent" in the broad, summative sense required for the awarding of a degree. Each student at the School for New Learning accumulates individual "competences" until such time as he or she is judged to possess sufficient overall competence to merit certification for graduation. A "competent" graduate is thus one who possesses the full range of specified "competences" gained either through experiences prior to SNL or through new learning. Defining competence, then, was an essential responsibility of the SNL designers and is a continued responsibility of the ongoing staff.

Following are a number of considerations that have shaped the SNL approach, which is a minority approach compared to those approaches taken by most competency-based programs within the Non-Traditional Movement.

One main idea is that competence is a generic and transferable entity. Competence is potential performance, while performance is actualized competence. Performance is situational in a way that competence is not. A competent cabinet-maker, for example, who is able to make a desk, a set of shelves, or any type of cabinet, will perform differently depending upon which application of his skill is required; yet his basic competence as a cabinet-maker does not change. Nor does the competence of the cabinet-maker change merely because he constructs relatively better or worse cabinets from time to time. His level of competence may change over time, but it is unlikely to fluctuate at the rate characteristic of his individual performances.

Whether the competence be a mental one such as linguistic ability or a manual one such as cabinet-making skill, competence both precedes and transcends performance. General competence is the substratum of capabilities from which a person may summon up the particular skills which need to be used on any given occasion. Specific competences are the particular abilities which enable a person to perform adequately within a more limited range.

At the heart of any competence-based program are the tasks of assessment and evaluation. Students' levels of competence need to be appraised at the point of entrance in order to inform admissions decisions and to facilitate the formation of suitable learning objectives by students. Levels of competence also need to be appraised throughout students' tenure in the program in order to determine the extent to which their learning objectives are being achieved and in order to assess and improve the quality of support services being provided to them. Finally, some form of summative appraisal must be used in order to ascertain whether advanced students are sufficiently competent to merit certification for graduation.

Before turning to a consideration of some of the major issues which attend the assessment and evaluation of competence, it may be useful to define several key terms. Throughout this chapter the terms "assessment" and "evaluation" will not be used interchangeably when referring to the determination of an individual's competence. For our purposes, assessment is the process of acquiring and confirming qualitative information about the capabilities, performances or achievements of an individual, while evaluation is the process of judging the sufficiency of those capabilities, performances or achievements with respect to suitable norms or criteria.

The tasks of assessment and evaluation are central to competence-based programs in yet other ways which are, perhaps, even more fundamental. The need to assess competence, for instance, significantly affects both the selection and description of the specific competences which constitute the program's framework. In a complementary manner, the need to evaluate competence affects the determination and use of standards. Both processes also tend to have a significant impact on the design of procedures and selection of personnel. For example, the "generalist" model of assessment at the School for New Learning (note later section on generalists) has overlapped into many other areas of the program's operation, including counselling and management.

The process of assessing competence contains two essential components, one of which has been over-emphasized in recent years and one of which has been relatively ignored: the first component is evidence-gathering and the second is inference-making. Each of these components requires a unique set of operating procedures and each reflects a unique set of underlying principles. As will be shown, if assessment methods emphasize either set of principles or procedures at the expense of the other, an ineffective appraisal of competence is almost sure to result.

The evidence-gathering component of assessment involves the observation and notation of overt characteristics which may indicate competence. In its more advanced forms, this component may assume the character of "measurement," a methodology of assessment which emphasizes (1) the reduction of complex human characteristics into discrete components which may be observed individually, and (2) the use of criteria which are scalar or, at the very least, quantifiable. While both of these emphases aid in the development of descriptive instruments which are technically valid and reliable, they also have the effect of diminishing the adequacy of such instruments as indicators of competence.

Inference-making, the second major component of this form of evaluation, is the process of arriving at an opinion or conclusion on the basis of circumstantial evidence, which may take the forms of testimony, documents, or tangible products.¹⁰ Regardless of the types of evidence made available to the fact-finder or assessor, an inference may be drawn if, in accordance with the reasonable experience of mankind, a logical relationship is perceived between the known facts and circumstances and the conclusion(s) sought to be proved. An example may help to clarify this point.

There are several ways of telling whether my morning coffee is hot. I may apply it directly to my sense of feeling, in which case the sensation of heat results, and convinces the mind without process of inference. I may, however, not touch the coffee, but only observe the vapor arising from it, in which case I am equally well satisfied that it is hot, but inference has played an important part. I have inferred that it is hot because experience has taught me that, in similar cases where I observed the vapor rising, upon touching the coffee the sensation of heat resulted. On this experience I base an inference, from the fact that

vapor arises, that the coffee is hot. I may neither touch or see the coffee, but may hear it boiling on the stove. Previous experience having taught me to connect the sound with the presence of heat in the liquid, I infer from the sound that heat is present this time. To go a step further, I may ask X. to tell me what he knows about the coffee, and X., having been in the kitchen, and seen the coffee poured into the cup, and seen the cook take hold of the cup and suddenly jerk away her hand, may relate this circumstance to me. With this fact as a basis, and having neither touched, seen, nor heard the coffee, I, at once, by process of inference, am impressed that the coffee is hot. ¹¹

What this example emphasizes is the intuitive nature of any judgment-making process. The degree of certainty which accompanies any conclusion reached by inference is a function of both the accuracy, relevancy, and sufficiency of the available evidence and the quality of the inference itself. Unfortunately, evidence is seldom as explicit as we would like it to be in either a traditional or non-traditional setting, and judges or assessors are not always able to make inferences of consistently high quality.

Even when the evidence is sufficient to warrant an inferential determination, there must be someone who is competent to make the inference. Any good doctor knows that sickness is broader than the symptoms which reveal it, yet the unknowing layman may fail to perceive the co-relation between those symptoms and therefore fail to diagnose an underlying sickness. What is required on the part of the doctor is an ability to perceive the "evidential continuity" of observable symptoms. He must be able to recognize the relevance of certain symptoms and the irrelevance of others. Furthermore, he must possess sufficient familiarity with the ordinary relationship between various symptoms and various sicknesses in order to judge which sickness is actually responsible for the particular set of symptoms which he observes or is informed about.

In the educational domain there have appeared two major attempts to avoid the problematic and ambiguous nature of inferential assessment. These are, first, the attempt to eliminate the need for inferences and, second, the attempt to enforce the consistency of inferences in circumstances where they are necessary. Neither attempt has yet succeeded. Stimulated by the writings of Ralph Tyler and other educational theorists, many educators have attempted to impose increasingly tight levels of specificity upon their instructional objectives-- or upon the learning objectives of students. Concern about the formulation of "behavioral objectives" has filled the educational literature for nearly two decades, with the net result that many people today feel that the best statements of competence are those which are most explicit or those which describe wholly observable components of competence.

On the other hand, the School for New Learning has consistently upheld the point of view that "constructive ambiguity" must not be removed from any phase of its program, including its procedures for the appraisal of competence. In support of this view are many inter-related arguments which derive directly from the nature of competence(s) and the nature of inferential assessment, as well as from the nature of adult learners.

Respect for the presence of individual differences among students is one of the most important reasons for retaining a significant measure of "constructive ambiguity" in all phases of a program. There is no persuasive evidence that it is possible to construct a single set of learning objectives or competence criteria which will equitably serve the diverse needs and abilities of adult learners. At the School for New Learning, students enter the degree program with an incredible variety of backgrounds, abilities, career goals, and learning objectives.

This factor is especially important for institutions which draw students from an urban population. Urban populations exhibit a mixture of ethnic, racial, economic, and social differences unlike that found in most non-urban environments. The sheer size of urban populations is responsible for much of this variety. The effect of this social heterogeneity upon educational institutions is to force them to maintain a large measure of variability and flexibility in their programs or else to impose stringent entrance requirements.

The School for New Learning has constructed a single competence-based framework within which highly diverse students may pursue individually chosen learning objectives. The competence statements which comprise this framework have been carefully worded so as to provide guidance to students without unduly restricting their freedom. In fact, the framework tends to enhance students' freedom of educational pursuit by serving as an heuristic device for planning.

The School for New Learning believes that the interactive nature of learning, competence, and application to real life situations should be recognized and encouraged whenever possible. The School's competence framework conscientiously emphasizes the inter-relationships among competences, and its procedures for life experience evaluation attempt to stimulate students to view their own experiences and skills in a holistic manner, yet without sacrificing the degree of focus which is necessary for the appraisal of competence and the planning of new learning. Later in the program, during their Internships and Major Pieces of Work, students again are urged to blend disciplines and cross boundaries in the pursuit of usable competences.

Of course, the School does need to maintain a measure of definition and precision in its perspective on competence. Structures, procedures, and standards all require at least a minimum level of specification, which in turn means that some divisions need to be made within the full fabric of human competence. The School has responded to these requirements by publishing a competence framework within which both students and instructors must work. As will be seen in the next section, this framework is divided into five major areas of competence and each of these is further subdivided into as many as ten specified competences, some of which may be set by individual students but most of which are predetermined by the School.

The conscious maintenance of "constructive ambiguity" throughout the program has incurred both advantages and disadvantages, and in many respects has made the design and implementation of procedures more difficult than they otherwise might be. Nevertheless, the School has held fast to its original principles as it has gone about the task of implementing a competence-based program. Today, after four years of growth and development, the

School has a fully-developed competence framework, a set of criteria and principles for assessment, an expanding curriculum, and a variety of support services for both students and staff. It is to an analysis of these issues that we next turn our attention.

Implementing a Competence Framework

As summarized at the opening of this paper, the School's founders began with a set of assumptions regarding the purposes and nature and values of adult learning. It was realized at the outset that the achievement of these attributes would require the design of a program far different from those commonly available. Unacceptable to many adults would be another discipline-based, preparatory program; adults in mid-career, it was thought, would often prefer to develop competences which bridge or transcend traditional academic boundaries. Adults also would prefer a program which would integrate their past learning (both formal and informal) with any new learning they might undertake. In addition, it was felt that urban adults needed to acquire skills of self-planning, self-teaching, and self-assessment so that they might function more effectively within the rich resources of the city and its environs.

The School's founders further decided that no mechanistic model of education would be suitable for adult learners. Rather, adults were to be given a large degree of responsibility for directing their own educations and they were to do so with full regard for the circumstances of their individual lives. Adults learners, it was thought, should bring their life experiences to the School and conversely take their classroom learning back to their jobs and homes. There should be a unified approach to learning and living. After careful consultation with innovators in other programs and after considerable "brainstorming," the School's originators decided that a fresh, new approach was called for -- one which would be competence-based and would provide highly personalized services to adult learners.

In its redefinition of the Bachelor's degree, the School's earliest step was to establish a competence framework. This framework was intended to be, and has since developed into, a comprehensive statement of the "minimum indispensables" required of each adult who wishes to graduate from the School.

The School stresses five major areas of competence, all of which must be acquired by each degree-seeking student. The five major areas are:

- I. The World of Work (WW). These are skills and bodies of knowledge which enable students to do meaningful work. Each student must select a career specialization within one of three areas:
 - A. Developing and Managing Organizations (DM). This area includes organizational, administrative, and managerial skills.
 - B. Social Service (SS). This area includes skills which are necessary for effective social service to individuals and communities.

- C. Professional Preparation (PP). This area includes skills which prepare a student for further formal education or for certification of any kind. Because of the wide range of professions which adults may wish to follow, most competences within this area are set on an individual basis.
2. Communications and Interpersonal Relations (CI). These are skills which involve communicative processes. Each student must demonstrate the ability to communicate in English as well as in one other language or medium. Each student also must know how to use sources of information, how to interpret symbolic representations, how to diagnose and reduce barriers to communication, and how to assess the social functions of the mass media.
 3. The Human Community (HC). These are skills which enable students to survive within and improve their social communities. Students must understand basic cultural, economic, political, technological, and historical factors which shape social environments. Students also are required to demonstrate the ability to plan and assess one method of effecting social change.
 4. Quality of Life (QL). These are skills which enable students to renew themselves through the arts, philosophy, religion, and other cultural and re-creational activities.
 5. Lifelong Learning (LL). These are skills which enable adults to become independent learners. Each student must learn how to set career and educational goals, how to develop learning strategies, how to elicit and use criticism, how to assess what has been learned, how to apply that learning to personal or social objectives, and how to develop a plan for continuing self-renewal. Each student must also complete an Internship and Major Piece of Work.

Each of these five areas of competence is further subdivided into a number of specific skills, attitudes, and bodies of knowledge which each student must acquire prior to graduation. A full list of these competences may be found in Appendix D.

The framework has been designed to provide a measure of stability to the program while at the same time maintaining a considerable degree of flexibility for students. All of the competence statements are worded in such a manner that they encourage students to innovate within the framework, both in the interpretation of learning objectives and in the selection of learning and appraisal methods. In this sense, the competence statements may properly be considered "enabling objectives," for they help both students and staff to design an educationally sound learning program that is responsive to the diverse needs of individual adults.

The various ways in which the competence statements serve as "enabling objectives" deserve further attention, because in these functions reside the major advantages of the generalist competence model which the School has created. There are at least six major advantages which accrue from the implementation of a competence framework of this type:

1. The framework helps students to translate general goals into specific learning objectives. The competence statements serve as catalysts for educational planning both by those students who enter the School's degree program and by those who elect to attend other programs.
2. The framework exposes students to new areas of learning. Most of the adult students who enter the School's degree program are already proficient in one or more of the five major areas of competence, but usually they possess lower levels of competence in at least one of the other areas. The middle-aged executive, for instance, may be highly skilled in the World of Work competences but lack even fundamental competences in the Quality of Life area. By emphasizing the inter-connectedness of competences, the School helps adult learners to see the advantages of pursuing greater competence in these "new" areas.
3. The framework helps students to integrate discrete experiences. This occurs in several ways. First, the framework helps students to build bridges between academic disciplines. Students are shown that many academic disciplines can contribute to the attainment of a single competence and, conversely, that individual disciplines often can contribute to the attainment of many different competences. For many students and educators, this is a new and important insight.

Second, the framework helps students to integrate prior learning with new learning. Adult students always bring with them a history of formal and informal learning experiences. Unfortunately, students seldom know how to relate and evaluate what they may have learned from these prior experiences.

Finally, the framework helps students to integrate what they learn with how they live. Students are constantly stimulated to plan and evaluate their learning in terms of goals which transcend academic advancement.

4. The framework helps the staff of the School to provide a full range of support services to students. In ways analogous to those described above for students, the framework helps staff members to plan, conduct, and appraise the services which they provide. This occurs in many ways, not the least of which is in the recruiting of new staff members, faculty, and mentors. The use of a competence framework allows the School to specify in advance the qualifications which will enable candidates to fulfill the responsibilities of various roles. This is particularly helpful in light of the School's redefinition of the role for college professionals as mentors, counselors, teachers and evaluators.

Another way in which the framework is helpful is in the planning of curricula. The School promises to each student that at least one learning experience will be offered for every competency each year. By use of the framework, the School

is able to plan in advance both the distribution and content of courses. In addition, faculty members can be made clearly aware of the relationship of their course to the others that are being offered in the same academic quarter or year. As it does for students, the competence-based framework often helps faculty members to look at their discipline-based knowledge from a fresh perspective.

5. The framework helps both students and staff to communicate the School's characteristics to outsiders. The competence framework serves as a "handle" by which the School's aims, approaches and procedures can be described and justified to concerned parties who are not previously familiar with the School. Since the School is one of eight colleges within DePaul, the framework has been used as a means of explaining the School's unique contribution within the university to other members of that community. By so doing, the School has been able to serve as something of a change agent within the parent institution. Finally, the framework has proven to be an important mechanism by which to explain the content of the School's degree to accrediting agencies, employers, admissions officers, and others who need to examine what graduates have learned, or what a current student expects to learn. In all of these circumstances, use of the competence framework enables representatives and members of the School to communicate with confidence and accuracy what the program is about.
6. Finally and most importantly, the framework helps both students and staff to evaluate what students have learned and should be learning. The competence framework serves as multi-dimensional yardstick by which the staff of the School can appraise the total educational achievement of each student.

A review of the School's first three years will show that not all of these advantages have been fully or consistently achieved. The framework has been perceived by some parties as being unnecessarily rigid, while others have argued that it contains a damaging degree of internal ambiguity. All too often, both students and faculty have failed to use the framework to its fullest advantage as an educational tool. They "check off" competences as they had previously "checked off" course distribution requirements, with the result that the integrative effects of the framework often are diminished. Another problem has been the difficulty of determining what constitutes "college-level" learning in areas which are not customary in traditional programs.

The essential question is the difficulty of maintaining a balance between specificity and ambiguity. What is desired is controlled flexibility. If a program is to provide personalized service and yet retain an essential unity, it must simultaneously admit both ambiguity and specificity into the statement of its requirements and procedures. As a general rule of thumb, there needs to be enough specificity to provide direction to students and mentors, and yet enough ambiguity to allow freedom in the choice of learning objectives, learning methods, and assessment techniques.

The chief advantages of introducing greater specificity into the statement of competences and procedures have already been mentioned. By providing clearly identified anchor points, a program is able to seek appropriate people, plan relevant instructional and advisory services, appraise learning accurately, and communicate all of these processes with relative ease. Moreover, through the bold statement of its requirements, a program can help to insure that its components represent a purposeful fragmentation of the fabric of knowledge, and that they embody a unified approach to learning and living.

Of course, there are possible dangers in the approach as well. The pursuit of "constructive ambiguity" can be used as an excuse for arbitrariness or could potentially serve as a shield for shabby practices of many kinds. Ambiguity also can lead to debilitating frustration when students lack the skills or confidence to impose order upon disorder. If such students are not given appropriate support services, they may experience failure rather than personalized success. Conversely, the provision of too much specificity, excessively rigid requirements and procedures may frustrate individual initiative and discourage creativity.

The School for New Learning has struggled with the specificity-ambiguity issue ever since the initial planning stage of the program. It has consistently sought to develop measures and procedures that would provide more rigor without increased rigidity, and enhanced flexibility without greater frustration. The School has attempted to introduce greater clarity into the description of its competence framework and various procedures. On the other hand, many times the effort to inject greater clarity led to a realization that substantive issues also needed to be reconsidered.

No better example of this type of activity may be found than the development of facets for the competences, the major thrust of the project supported by FIPSE and the Lilly Foundation. Facets are components of competences (see Appendix D). The five facets listed are not mandatory but, rather, descriptive -- clarifying a range of possible valid directions for interpreting each competence.

The facets have evolved along with the competences. During the two-year period of the project for refining the competences and facets, the framework has undergone numerous revisions whose purpose was to introduce greater clarity while making relatively minor substantive changes.

The present competence framework is unlikely to undergo major changes over the short-term future. The School takes the view that the present structure is sufficiently clear to serve its major functions. During the past year the School has concentrated its attention upon the second major approach to resolving the specificity-ambiguity issue: the provision of support services.

Another method by which the School attempts to resolve the specificity-ambiguity issue is through the employment of generalists. Generalists (to be considered in the next section) are people who through a particular blend of temperament and training possess the quality of disciplined subjectivity. They are able to utilize the latitude which resolves the ambiguity in a constructive manner. They are flexible, but they are also in control. They realize

the contiguity of all areas of competence and, because they understand the circumstantiality of evidences of competence, they handle with relative ease a wide range of appraisal and advisory duties.

The basic advantage of employing generalists in key positions is that they have internalized the specificity-ambiguity resolution; they have tolerance for a non-structured situation. Generalists' responses to this new form of structure tend to be creative and personal. They understand that compromises must be made, that human affairs cannot be "boxed," and that responsible guidance includes both the provision of anchor points and the maintenance of freedom. Thus, in their relations with students, generalists exhibit the principle of "constructive ambiguity" in action. Their behavior serves as living evidence of the possibility of resolving the specificity-ambiguity quandary in a humane, personalized manner.

It should be evident from this cursory overview that the School relies very heavily upon the quality of its staff. The majority of "quality control" mechanisms at the School take the form of human interactions. To be sure, many of these interactions are guided by procedural regulations which set the timing and purposes of the encounters. Nevertheless, the fact remains that many of the critical judgments regarding the planning, provision, and appraisal of learning activities remain within the unfettered discretion of the major participants. Aside from a minimal number of written guidelines, the definition of "quality" resides in the people who staff the program.

Moreover, the School's philosophy has always been that the students are the most important agents of quality control. It is the students who bring educational goals to the program; it is the students who select and engage in learning activities, and it is the students who ultimately must make the determination whether what they have learned meets their objectives. Since all of the students at the School are adults, it is clearly stated that one of their responsibilities is to monitor their own progress. They are given continuous assistance, both formal and informal, to aid them in the exercise of this responsibility, but in the end it is they who must make the determinations regarding what constitutes minimally acceptable attainment.

Roles for Generalists

Ours is an age which favors specialists. Indeed, the culture of specialism now seems more firmly entrenched with academia than ever before. The employment of specialists as appraisors of experiential learning is highly consistent with a philosophy of educational design which emphasizes the fragmentation of knowledge. Whenever learning objectives and methods are organized in a manner which reflects disciplinary divisions, then it seems reasonable to call upon discipline-based experts to assess and evaluate whatever learning may occur. The validity of this conclusion seems to remain unaffected either by the blend of disciplinary requirements which comprise a particular curriculum or by the manner in which the institution gathers its specialized appraisors. What nearly all disciplines and their specialists have in common is a fundamental trust that learning can and should be "boxed".

While the advantages of this approach are well known, the School for New Learning has chosen to develop an alternative model, one which relies upon generalists rather than specialists. The School's founders were conscious of the fact that they were breaking with tradition, but felt that several sound educational principles supported their approach. First, it was thought that generalists would be better able than specialists to appraise the inter-disciplinary and super-disciplinary competences which comprise the School's academic framework. Second, it was thought that generalists would be better suited than specialists to counselling and instructing adult students, who differ very widely in interests, aptitudes, and learning objectives. Finally, it was felt that generalists would be more adaptable than specialists to the rather fluid, developmental structure of the School. The supposition was that generalists would feel "at home" in the School's innovative, relatively unstructured environment, whereas specialists would not.

What are the special qualities of generalist evaluators? It is evident that almost every type of activity, whether it is manual or intellectual, involves some integration of various skills and bodies of knowledge. The distinguishing feature of generalists cannot be merely that they are capable of handling more than one skill or body of knowledge, or that they are able to generalize, for these are skills possessed to some extent by almost every mature person. Thus, what distinguishes generalists from others must in some large sense be a matter of comparative competence. The generalist's ability to generalize must exceed a mere coping with diversity; the generalist must show an ability to integrate or manage diverse elements in a purposeful and constructive manner. Similarly, the generalist who applies himself to general studies must attend to an uncommonly wide or difficult range of fields. In short, generalists must possess above-average capacities in these areas.

As Abraham Flexner once pointed out, it is fashionable to rail against specialization in spite of its manifest benefits.¹² Specialization was necessary to the development of advanced knowledge, and few people question its contribution to the professionalization of many important occupations. Yet, at the same time, specialization repeatedly has been criticized for its detrimental effects upon education and upon society as a whole.

One of the most serious problems associated with specialism probably is the widespread presumption in favor of technical expertise. The cult of specialism has fostered the current belief that broad scholarship is superficial and unprofessional, and that anyone who lacks an area of specialization also lacks expertise. Perforce, this attitude has resulted in a pervasive bias against generalists who pursue general studies. In many intellectual and professional circles, the impression has arisen that generalists are people who are merely non-specialists. By implication, it is often additionally assumed that they are incompetent amateurs -- dilettantes.

Neither the merits nor demerits of this view will be debated here, except to state that the specialist-generalist dichotomy is a false one. The terms "specialist" and "generalist" are not mutually exclusive. In fact, a highly competent generalist may be proficient in several areas of specialization, and many specialists are known to transcend their specialities.¹³

It is appropriate to note that one potential effect of the competence-based movement is the opening-up of a new definition of generalists. Generalists may be able to perform significantly more effectively than specialists in the fulfillment of selected responsibilities such as inter-disciplinary instruction and appraisal, counselling, and programmatic experimentation. It is to a fuller consideration of these matters that we now turn our attention.

At the School for New Learning, generalists appraise most evidences of learning.¹⁴ Generalists advise students in the purposes and methods of preparing portfolios, assess and evaluate the evidences of learning contained within these portfolios, and counsel students regarding further learning endeavors. Generalists, aided by the Academic Mentor (a specialist), also serve on students' individual Advisory Committees. Here they guide students in the selection of assessment methods to be used in contract-based learning and, after the learning has taken place, generalists either assess and evaluate it directly or else evaluate the assessments of others. Finally, after the student has completed all requirements for the degree, he or she is evaluated one last time by the combined staff of the School -- most of whom are generalists. The major specialist role at School for New Learning, other than the Academic Mentor, is the Visiting Faculty member who teaches competence-based courses. Even the Visiting Faculty role has a generalist component because the courses are interdisciplinary in nature.

In the appraisal of competence, no attribute is more important than the ability to make inferences from partial evidences. As we saw previously, competence(s) is (are) rarely able to be measured in any simple or direct manner. Instead, competence(s) ordinarily must be inferred from various partial evidences of prior performances. Since the varying goals of students affect the definitions of competence by which they are to be appraised, and since the unique experiences of students dictate the types of evidence which are available to support their claims of competence, the task of generalist appraisors is a complex one.

Within the School's competence model, the task of appraisal requires that evaluators be able to make judgments regarding students' levels of competence sometimes in spite of the absence of definitive evidences. This means that appraisors must be able to take marginally related products, actions, experiences, testimonials, etc., and fashion a judgment which is at the same time both a leap of inference and a justifiable exercise of informed discretion. The key to this form of activity seems to be the possession of certain critical faculties, which in the School's judgment are most likely to be found in those persons who are skilled in generalist modes of inquiry.

Generalists, it is thought, have many features which recommend them in place of specialists. Generalists have a broader exposure to content areas. While they may not be expert in most of them, they ordinarily are able to make comparative evaluations, to appreciate the interaction of disciplines, and to determine which types of evidence will serve as appropriate indicators of competence in each domain. The fact that generalist usually lack detailed expertise in all specific curricular areas can be compensated for,

when necessary, by recourse to more highly trained specialists. Even when specialists must be called in to help in the appraisal of abstruse or technical competences, the generalist's role as mediator can be a highly important one to the student. By encouraging subject specialists to address their remarks and appraisals to other staff members who are not specialists in the same areas, the School stimulates more effective communication between the specialized expert and the lay student.

In summary, the essential skill of the generalist evaluator is the ability to make critical judgments. The analogy can be made to the mastery of the orchestra conductor who must have a sense of timing, sensitivity to the range of all instruments, and a talent for interpreting the range of meanings within a single piece of music, as opposed to the specialist role of the individual musicians -- cellists, flutists or percussionists.

Insofar as possible, the School makes an attempt to select generalists whose areas of competence complement one another. Through the maintenance of a generalist staff, with mixed backgrounds and skills, the School is able to minimize the number of occasions on which specialists must be called in to assist in appraisals of learning. However, the School takes the view that doctoral-level subject expertise should seldom be the only qualification necessary or sufficient for the proper appraisal of learning. In most areas of competence, it is possible for a well-informed generalist to make valid estimates of competence.

Generalists who serve at the School for New Learning must have the attitude that specialized expertise is valuable but insufficient -- either as a goal for learning or as a standard for judgment. Yet, at the same time, they must perceive the existence of minimum standards in each of the competence areas which comprise the framework, whether or not those areas overlap traditional disciplinary areas. Generalists must be aware of the basic attributes and canons of each discipline. They must have a sense of what constitutes "college level" work in each pertinent area of knowledge or skill.¹⁵ In the application of these standards, generalists (like any other appraisors) must exercise their discretion flexibly and creatively. They must be able to distinguish between the letter and the spirit of guidelines. They must be able to adapt criteria to individual circumstances, and in the appraisal of unusual competences or unusual evidences they must exhibit a tolerance for ambiguity. They must be able to negotiate with students and others over the "middle ground" which lies somewhere between disciplinary rigidity and academic anarchy. In other words, they must be able to distinguish shades of gray in a world which is not all black or white.

Summary

Key ideas outlined in this paper may be summarized as follows:

- A competence-based redefinition of the bachelor's degree to suit the needs of of adult students;

- generalist approach to competence evaluation (in assessment of both life experiences and new learning experiences);
- development of new models for counselling adults;
- integration of new professional roles of administration, teaching and counselling;
- use of community-based Visiting Faculty (no full-time or tenured faculty);
- a curriculum based on a synergistic model for how adults learn (Appendix E);
- implementation of a valid process of criterion-based assessment of skills and knowledges gained outside the walls of a classroom;
- a committee-based process to help students design individual programs to achieve their educational goals within the perimeters of a standardized competence framework; and,
- design of a learning process that emphasizes students' acquiring the knowledge, skills and attitudes to become lifelong learners and facilitate the integration of life and learning.

The Project Directors gratefully acknowledge the contributions of:

- DePaul University's leaders
- the School for New Learning staff
- colleagues in the non-traditional movement

all of whom shared ideas and advice.

We warmly thank the staff of FIPSE not only for the courage to fund this unusual project, but for their personal counsel and support.

We are especially indebted to the School for New Learning students, particularly the pioneers of the first two years of the School. They have been the co-designers of the over-all program as well as of their own B.A. degrees.

FOOTNOTES

1. "A Design for New Learning" (Chicago: School for New Learning, DePaul University, mimeographed, no date), adapted from pp. 9-10.
2. "School for New Learning Student Profile" (Chicago: School for New Learning, DePaul University, mimeographed, 1975).
3. Adults may enroll in SNL competence-based courses without formally entering the degree program and without attending a Discovery Workshop. They do so without any pressure to apply for admission.
4. The following historical analysis is based chiefly upon the following sources, listed in approximately the order of contribution: John Edward Sadler, J.A. Comenius and the Concept of Universal Education (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1966). Wilhelmus Rood, Comenius and the Low Countries (Amsterdam: Van Gendt & Co., 1970). Joseph Needham, editor, The Teacher of Nations (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1942). Robert Hebert Quick, Essays on Educational Reformers (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1897). M. W. Keating, The Great Didactic of John Amos Comenius (New York: Russell & Russell, 1967), reprinted from second revised edition, 1910, two volumes. S.S. Laurie, John Amos Comenius (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1904), original 1884. Vladimir Jelinek, The Analytical Didactic of Comenius (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953). Norman Malcolm, Problems of Mind (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1971). W.H.G. Armytage, Four Hundred Years of English Education (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1964). Hugh Kearney, Scholars and Gentlemen (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1970). Albert Matthews, "Comenius and Harvard College," Transactions of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts 21: 146-190 (1919). Harry Elmer Barnes, An Intellectual and Cultural History of the Western World (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1965), third revised edition, three volumes. Richard Foster Jones, editor, Francis Bacon: Essays, Advancements of Learning, New Atlantis and Other Pieces (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Doran & Company, 1937). Ellwood P. Cubberly, The History of Education (Cambridge, Mass.: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1920). Peter Gay, editor, John Locke on Education (New York: Teachers College Press, 1964). George Sabine, editor, John Milton: Areopagita and Of Education (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1951). William Boyd, editor, The Minor Educational Writings of Jean Jacques Rousseau (New York: Teachers College Press, 1962).
5. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, Inc., 1973), p. xv.

6. "General Education: The Minimum Indispensables," in The Philosophy of the Curriculum: The Need for General Education, edited by Sidney Hook, Paul Kurtz and Miro Todorovich (Buffalo: Prometheus Books, 1975), pp. 27-36. This discussion also is informed by two other works: Maxwell H. Goldberg, Design in Liberal Learning (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1971) and Bradley Sagen, "The Professions: A Neglected Model for Undergraduate Education," Liberal Education 59(4): 507-519 (December, 1973).
7. Alfred North Whitehead, The Aims of Education and Other Essays (New York: Mentor Books, 1960), p. 50.
8. While the concepts and processes to defining the B.A. degree may vary widely there are, to be sure, other college-level programs that have attempted to integrate learning and life. An excellent example of this is Antioch College, founded in 1852.
9. Dewey's thought pervades so much of the field of adult education that it is now virtually taken for granted. His works which have had the greatest influence on the field are How We Think (Boston: Heath, 1910); Democracy and Education (New York: Macmillan, 1916); and Experience and Education (New York: Macmillan, 1938).
10. Charles E. Torcia, Wharton's Criminal Evidence, 13th edition (Rochester: Lawyers Cooperative Publishing Co., 1972), 1, pp. 3-5.
11. John Jay McKelvey, Handbook on the Law of Evidence, 5th edition (St. Paul, Minn.: West Publishing Co., 1944), p. 7.
12. Universities: American, English, German (London: Oxford University Press, 1930), pp. 23-24.
13. This observation was made by William T. Couch, The Human Potential (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1974), p. 226. Earlier in the same work he notes that the "mere specialists" are in the overwhelming majority (p. 37).
14. The issue of whether the School's staff actually are generalists will not be considered. The burden of the argument is to examine the approach and not to defend or criticize the personnel who assume "generalist" roles at the School.
15. The School is currently continuing its work on the definition of what is "college-level." This problem -- common to all academic innovators -- is particularly interesting when viewed within the framework of a generic approach to competence. The direction of the School's development of B.A. level criteria can be found in the Life Experience Handbook (Appendix c). This document is used by students, evaluators and faculty not only to aid in appraising prior learning but new learning as well.

APPENDIXES

- A. An "Overview" of the School for New Learning, DePaul University.
- B. Agenda of the Discovery Workshop.
- C. Life Experience Evaluation Handbook.
- D. Competencies and Facets: The Framework of the School for New Learning.
- E. School for New Learning 1976-77 Course Guide.



School for New Learning

The School for New Learning (SNL) is a non-traditional college for adults at DePaul University. As part of an accredited senior institution, the SNL offers a full bachelor's program.

The School for New Learning is a competency-based program featuring contract learning and individualized curriculum. Adult learners have responsibility for designing their own educations and opportunity to get credit for life experience gained outside the traditional walls of a university.

All students must be 24 years or older. Students may enroll with two different types of goals:

1. To gain a bachelor's degree. (Must demonstrate competency in all five competency areas shown below.)
2. For continuing education and/or self-renewal.

The School for New Learning is redefining the goals of a college education in terms of giving students the skills, knowledges and attitudes to help them fulfill personal goals through education, survive and thrive in the world in which we live and become lifelong learners. The school is based on five areas of competence that cut across lines of traditional academic disciplines.

FIVE COMPETENCE AREAS - THE FRAMEWORK OF THE NEW SCHOOL

The five major areas are:

THE WORLD OF WORK (WW). These are skills that allow students to do meaningful work. Each SNL student selects a career specialization from one of three areas:

- A. Developing and Managing Organizations (DM) - administrative and managing organization skills.
- B. Social Service (SS) - Social welfare and people skills.
- C. Professional Preparation (PP) - individually designed academic programs (when a student goal involves traditional academic areas, certification or graduate school).

COMMUNICATIONS AND INTERPERSONAL RELATIONS (CI).

English language skills as well as sending and receiving messages in other media and understanding interpersonal barriers to communication.

THE HUMAN COMMUNITY (HC). Social Science and Science awareness with special emphasis on living in an urban environment.

QUALITY OF LIFE (QL). Skills related to how people renew themselves through the arts, philosophy, religion and city resources.

LIFELONG LEARNING (LL). This is perhaps the most non-traditional area at SNL. Here are skills of being an independent learner: goal setting, research, self-preservation, use of resources, developing learning strategies and designs and evaluation.

This framework of competence areas is the basis for all new learning pacts or educational plans. The framework also provides the means of evaluating life experience -- that is, a method of recognizing what skills or knowledges the entering student brings to the school. It is also the guide for planning curriculum and mapping out specific learning strategies to help the student fulfill the remaining competencies. Each area of competence consists of a list of specific behaviors - skills, knowledges, attitudes and understandings that can be demonstrated in a number of different ways, according to the student's own interests and goals.

At the school, there is no difference between credit and non-credit courses. Learning, gaining competence, is what counts, rather than accumulating credits. Any SNL coursework taken without formal admittance to a degree program can later be used towards achieving the degree. For purposes of possible transferability to other programs, quarter-hour credits will be assigned to earn learning experience.

THE PROCESS OR EDUCATIONAL FORMAT

There are eight phases to the degree student's education at SNL. The SNL does not wish to emphasize acquiring a degree. It is easiest to present the school's design in terms of the degree process, but it is learning rather than credentials that matter. The school is committed to students with the two types of educational goals.

This is the path for B.A. students:

1. DISCOVERY WORKSHOP, the Entrance Experience.

All students must enter the SNL through the channel of this counseling and self-evaluation, small-group experience. Since the program is highly goal-oriented, students learn to articulate their educational goals, concentrate on their strengths and resources in regard to the five competence areas, learn about non-traditional education and are individually counselled about alternative educational options. With fellow adult learners, the student engages in co-operative learning and generates creative answers to barriers in returning to school.

2. ADMISSIONS.

Admissions criteria include age, studentship, goals and independence, flexibility and maturity. It is important that this be the best educational option for the students who enroll for this independent learning program. Students examine the events in their life that have contributed to their growth, aging and renewal.

3. LIFE EXPERIENCE EVALUATION.

After acceptance into the degree program, the student attends a PORTFOLIO PREPARATION WORKSHOP in which students are given guides to help develop a portfolio of evidence for crediting life experience competencies. This portfolio is evaluated to determine which competencies have already been fulfilled by the student.

4. LEARNING PACT NEGOTIATION.

After submitting a portfolio, the student attends a PROGRAM DESIGN SEMINAR, which focuses on how to complete the SNL program. After the portfolio has been evaluated, the student continues his relationship to the school through an individual COMMITTEE composed of the student, academic mentor, community resource person, peer, and an SNL staff member. Together, the student and his unique committee decide what skills a student already has, and what needs to be done to fulfill the remaining competencies depending on the student's own goals. Specific learning strategies are designed. This includes course work done at the seven traditional schools at DePaul, learning experiences at the SNL and at other schools or institutions anywhere in Chicago where the needed learning can best take place. The Learning Pact, then, includes goals, learning strategies to achieve them and methods by which the competencies will be evaluated.

5. FULFILLMENT OF LEARNING PACT.

This stage includes all learning experiences, which may be traditional courses, independent study, field work, internships, seminars, group learning forums, etc. Included in this stage is the MAJOR SEMINAR, an advanced, small-group seminar with a disciplinary focus.

6 & 7. INTERNSHIP AND MAJOR PIECE OF WORK.

All degree students must also complete an INTERNSHIP, and the production of a MAJOR PIECE OF WORK. The INTERNSHIP module combines field work and attendance at an SNL practicum on the issues of work.

8. SUMMIT SEMINAR, the Exit Experience.

This is a small group seminar which parallels the Discovery Workshop. It features a FINAL EVALUATION, transcript writing, counseling, re-assessment of goals, work on future plans and student evaluation of the SNL experience. The students attend traditional DePaul Commencement Exercises, although they can be certified to graduate at almost any time in the year.

ACCREDITATION AND TRANSFERABILITY.

The Bachelor of Arts is an accredited DePaul University undergraduate degree. All BA students will, by the time of graduation, have demonstrated competence in all five areas of expertise.

SNL assigns specific credit hours and grades of pass/fail for its learning modules and all coursework pursued at the school is for college credit. The student will have the option of electing grades if a grade is needed for any reason. In order to make our learning experiences meaningful to traditional schools, there will be a non-traditional transcript providing the basis for converting these non-traditional units into traditional credit hours. (The Discovery Workshop, for example, offers two quarter-hours of DePaul credit.)

TUITION .

Tuition at the School for New Learning is computed at a quarter-hour equivalency rate of \$45 per hour. (DePaul Night School rate is \$45 per hour, Day School rate is higher and depends upon the total number of hours for which the student registers.)

Basic requirements for a B.A. degree are listed below. The exact cost of an individual program is individual; that is, it depends both on the amount of life experience a student brings with him and on the educational goal he wishes to achieve. (These costs apply to 1976-77 academic year only.)

Discovery Workshop	\$	98	(2 quarter-hours course)
Life Experience Evaluation		270	(6 quarter-hours course)
Learning Pact Negotiation and Committee Counseling		270	(6 quarter-hours course)
All Courses*: including classroom, independent studies, etc. for SNL only (based on 4 quarter-hour base)		45 per quarter hour	(3 SNL courses of 4 quarter hours each and one Major Seminar of 6 quarter hours is the minimum. Minimum = \$810.)
Internship		270	(6 quarter-hours course)
Major Final Piece of Work		270	(6 quarter-hours course)
Final Evaluation and Summit Seminar		<u>270</u>	(6 quarter-hours course)
	\$	2,258	= Minimum Cost of B.A. degree program at the School for New Learning

*All courses taken in other colleges of DePaul or at other educational institutions require that the student pay the tuition as specified by each college at DePaul or at other institutions in the community.

TUITION (Continued)

Estimate of Full Time Cost for one year (3 quarters out of 4): (Based on minimum 12 hours per quarter)	\$1,620
Estimate of Half Time Cost for one year (3 quarters out of 4): (Based on minimum 6 hours per quarter)	\$ 810
Cost per Single Learning course (4 quarter-hours course):	\$ 180

Long run savings exist because the average student opts out of approximately two years of college if they have relevant life experiences, plus they can (and most students will) be able to attend school at their own pace while continuing to work full time or raise a family. The most precious savings will perhaps be in TIME. There is no time limit and it is possible for a highly competent person to complete the degree in less than one year.

FINANCIAL AIDS

All information regarding Financial Aid opportunities for School for New Learning students can be obtained from the Office of Financial Aids and Placement, 25 E. Jackson, Room 1730, Chicago (321-7632).

STAFF

The full-time administrative staff is available for counseling and interviews. This is a student-oriented program - there is nothing more important than helping students become advocates for themselves. The people resources are: Howard A. Sulkin, Dean; Marilyn Stocker, Associate Dean; Mildred Badanes, Student Services Co-ordinator; Kaye DeVold, New Learning Co-ordinator; Teri Hennes, Counselor; Dorothy Inserra, Northwest Program Co-ordinator; Claire Persily, Registrar; Robin Petersen, Records Secretary; Marybeth Schroeder, Curriculum Secretary; and Evelyn Mulry, Receptionist/Secretary. In addition, there is a large resource bank of both academic and community faculty from a myriad number of areas of skill and philosophy, who will both teach part-time and act as mentors to SNL students.

THE NORTHWEST SUBURBAN LEARNING CENTER

DePaul has opened a center at 1500 West Higgins Road, Park Ridge, (692-3567), to serve the Northwest suburbs. The purpose of this regional center is to take the University to the community, to recruit and counsel local students, reduce their traveling time and develop learning experiences in direct response to local needs.

BARRIERS REDUCTION

There are a number of reasons why non-traditional populations such as adults, women, Latins, seniors, Blacks, for instance, have been prevented from entering post-secondary programs. The main goal of this school is to make relevant education as available and responsive as possible. Here are just a few of the methods for reducing barriers which SNL employs:

BARRIERS REDUCTION (Continued)

- Class locations and times are arranged to allow for maximum variety to meet the time and place restrictions of all kinds of students.
- Registration and admittance take place all year around, in contrast to present fixed schedules of entry.
- Learners can advance at their own pace. Without wasting energies or duplicating efforts, adult students can achieve their individual goals while they fulfill their commitments in other parts of their lives. Students have an active role in designing their own education.
- False barriers between the university and "real world" are broken away, and life-long learning can become an open-ended, exciting venture.

Weekly information sessions are held for small groups of interested students.
For further information or to sign up, call 321-7901.

The School for New Learning
DePaul University
23 East Jackson - 6th Floor
Chicago, Illinois 60604

PHONE: 321-7901

SNL course guide listing Discovery Workshops and all learning experiences will be sent to you if your name is placed on our mailing list.

6/76

Revised 10/76

APPENDIX

BACKGROUND OF THE SCHOOL FOR NEW LEARNING

History of the College

In Fall of 1972, DePaul University created the School for New Learning (SNL) in response to growing pressures that universities become more relevant, provide greater options, and reduce barriers for populations of adults traditionally denied access to higher education. There was growing concern that education should not be an isolated, isolating experience for eighteen to twenty-two year olds--but rather that learning should legitimately be a lifelong activity. Another major source of criticism was that present educational hierarchies were becoming rigid systems of academic hurdles, concerned with accumulation of credits leading to degrees that might have little relationship to actual skills or knowledges needed in the "real" world of work or continued study. At the same time, there was no viable way to recognize meaningful competencies gained through life experience outside the walls of academia.

The Non-Traditional Movement

The Non-Traditional Movement aims to build FLEXIBILITY, seek alternative resources in the community and reduce time, place and course requirements that prevent many adult students from entering existing institutions. Basic to the movement is emphasis placed on assessment of competence (what a person can do) rather than on accumulation of credits (how they officially gained these skills, knowledges and attitudes). Another important value is that adult learners should have responsibility and authority for designing their own educations as opposed to the passive role fostered in many traditional schools. This, in turn, places responsibility on non-traditional programs to provide personal counseling, to help mature students become self-advocates and independent learners. This critical need for counseling has caused a redefinition of the role of faculty and administrators as mentors or guides to students.

DePaul University, Commitment to Chicago

The School for New Learning is an urban-oriented college, committed to using the city as a learning resource and to provide students with the abilities to help them survive, thrive and enhance the textures of metropolitan life. DePaul has long been committed to Chicago and its mission involved meeting the special needs of city students and opening up the university to new populations of students.

The School for New Learning, together with the seven sister DePaul schools, shares two Chicago campuses--one in the Loop, and the other near Lincoln Park on the near North side. In addition, there is the Northwest Suburban Learning Center in Park Ridge.

DISCOVERY WORKSHOP AGENDA

THE GOALS FOR DISCOVERY WORKSHOP STUDENTS ARE:

1. To articulate his or her educational goals.
2. To realize what strengths, skills and resources he or she can bring to the college experience.
3. To participate in a small group engaged in COOPERATIVE learning.
4. To learn about non-traditional options at the School for New Learning.
5. To reduce barriers in returning to school.
6. To be counseled about alternatives in higher education.
7. To learn how to apply to the School for New Learning.

OBJECTIVES FOR THE FIRST TWO DAYS:

1. To look at what the educational experience means to adults returning to school.
2. To learn how SNL works, as well as comparing it to other educational alternatives.
3. To begin solving problems in returning to school.
4. To begin to work as a group in co-operative learning.
5. To get used to the non-traditional learning environment at SNL (vocabulary, style, process, new role for adult student).
6. To focus in on where a student is in terms of prior learning: what skills, knowledge and attitudes a student already has and how they can apply at SNL or elsewhere.
7. To learn to articulate educational and long-range personal goals and strategies to achieve them.

ACTIVITIES FOR FIRST TWO DAYS INCLUDE:

- General Introductions.
- Questions about the Workshop
- Rap by SNL staff member about returning to school and "What You Always Wanted To Know About the School for New Learning" and question and answer periods.



- Goal-setting exercise
- Reading and discussing four autobiographical sketches of SNL adult students.
- Small groups meeting to consider mutual barriers in returning to school and creative problem solving.
- Large group work on Competency- based education and self-assessment.
- FISHBOWL (Strengths and skills Pool) a large group technique to teach students how to look at their own lives and extract valuable strengths, skills and competencies from diverse activities.
- Work with competence workbook, strength and skill inventory and competence framework self-assessment tools to teach students how to re-evaluate themselves, demonstrate present skills and begin planning new learning programs. The SNL competence framework will be used as a tool for students' self-assessment whether they plan to attend SNL or not.

HOMEWORK:
Assignment

1. Read and fill out both a) Competence, Strength and Skills Inventory (Fishbowl-exercise) and b) Competence, Self Assessment Tool. (SNL competencies for the B.A. and rating scale).
2. Use the self-evaluation gained from working with the above tools to fill out your sample application with special attention to:
 - a) writing your educational goal statement
 - b) listing your proposed new learning strategies
 - c) listing your educational resources
 - d) writing your self presentation educationally-focused AUTOBIOGRAPHY. (In this your own voice will speak to any Admissions Committee or review panel anywhere).
3. Future Shock, read Chapter 18 "Education in the Future Tense" for discussion next week.

While we strongly recommend at least scanning the whole book, discussion will focus on Chapter 18. The book is available at most bookstores, newstands and libraries.

OBJECTIVES FOR DAY THREE

1. To learn specific next steps in applying to SNL.
2. To learn to become a self-advocate through acting as advocate for other students.

3. To learn beginning steps in designing a learning program to achieve personal goals.
4. To begin using other students as educational resources.
5. To understand the role of being a change agent in one's own life and in becoming a lifelong learner.
6. To learn to do self-evaluation and assessment and get most "credit" for strengths and skills through skillful self-presentation.
7. To be familiar enough with non-traditional education and SNL to make a viable personal choice of educational options and plan the appropriate next steps.

ACTIVITIES FOR DAY THREE INCLUDE:

- Sharing of responses and questions over the interim.
- Work on the concepts and meanings of the competencies (homework).
- Presentation of MISSION POSSIBLE--how step by step to apply for admission to SNL and specific questions about SNL B.A. process in comparison to other educational alternatives.
- Discussion of reading and "The Price of Change".
- Small groups to review goals, statements and educational autobiographies -- acting as critics and advocates for each other.
- Interviews with SNL graduates and/or "veteran" students to bring a reality and perspective. Hopefully through an honest exchange, new students can gain real images of the SNL quality of life. Reality will hopefully be buffered by a sense of humor as students discuss their real-life learning experiences, providing a multi-dimensional portrait of this as an educational option.
- PERSONAL COUNSELING. One-to-one interviews with SNL staff (to discuss next steps and/or alternative options if SNL is not a viable choice) will be arranged by appointment at the Workshop or SNL offices. This is both an admissions interview and an educational counseling session and in all cases is student-oriented. Be prepared to ask your staff person what you need to know in terms of SNL admissions, credits, B. A. process, goals, strategies time schedule, financing or any areas of interest to you.
- Students will be asked to complete an EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE, giving SNL direct feedback on the value of various parts of the Workshop.
- Farewell and Best Wishes.
- Students will be given an SNL application form as well as a more detailed version of the competence framework to be used in their life experience stage, should they choose to enter SNL -B.A. program. Students choosing alternative options leave with SNL warm wishes. Hoping they continue their enthusiasm in whatever setting for lifelong learning.

PORTFOLIO PREPARATION: LIFE EXPERIENCE HANDBOOK



School for New Learning
DEPAUL UNIVERSITY 23 E. Jackson Blvd. Chicago, Illinois 60604 (312) 321-7901

PART I CRITERIA STATEMENT -- PHILISOPHICAL APPROACHES TO COMPETENCY

The School for New Learning (SNL) is redefining college education for adult learners in terms of skills, knowledges and attitudes that help people understand living in today's world as well as attaining as much mobility or freedom of choice as possible. The competence statements are written as generally as they are to allow for a wide range of individual variation in the ways students either demonstrate past achievements or plan new learning. This flexibility is essential to the basic tenets of our non-traditional student-centered approach. It also relates to our emphasis on students being able to articulate their own educational goals so that they can interpret this framework in terms of their own life needs.

While this set of competences describes a general outline of what we consider to be a college education, it does not begin to delineate the quality of skills and knowledge for the individual student. In this approach, it is not possible to write an easy set of standards or criteria for evaluating each student's competence. Instead, we would rather describe a set of principles of what constitutes college-level knowledge and skill.

These general criteria will be used consistently to evaluate whether a student is "competent". (This decision will be made in the very specific content areas students either bring with them through Life Experience Evaluation (LEE) or achieve through new learning at SNL.)

Remember: This school affords you the opportunity of developing a highly individualized program without sacrificing academic standards. Therefore the level of attainment or quality of each competence will vary from student to student, depending on the individual's goal and talents. (Not all students will achieve each competence at the same level, in the same area, or even in the same fashion. Yet, there is some consistent meaning in the degree attained at SNL provided by the competence framework.) It is also important to note that in the end, it is self-assessment that counts and while careful preservation of academic quality will be demanded by the evaluation staff and teaching faculty, a student will take away only what he or she puts into his/her education.

The following are some general characteristics of SNL's definition of what is "college level competence". These are offered as a philosophical declaration rather than a mechanistic set of rules or standards:

All competent B.A. students...

1. Can use the vocabulary of several academic disciplines (*Definition*).
2. Can communicate in several forms of written or oral work: documented research, essays, logical arguments, creative development of new ideas, and business or work-oriented technical writing (*Communication*).
3. Can discriminate between their own ideas and the restatement of others' ideas (*Documentation*).

4. Can analyze information and data, categorize it into useful conceptual groupings and understand the relationships between groupings (*Comparison*).
5. Understands the relationship between theoretical models and their practical implications (*Implementation*).
6. Can generalize theory from specific examples (*Inductive reasoning*) and can cite specific examples from theoretical constructs (*Deductive reasoning*) (*Logic*).
7. Understands the differences between subjectivity and objectivity (*Judgement*).
8. Can name a problem, research its history, state alternative ways of dealing with it, list resources, select a method, implement the method and evaluate the results (*Problem-solving behavior*).
9. Can state and apply criteria for evaluating bodies of knowledge, examples of work, or situations (*Criticism and Evaluation*).
10. Can combine diverse conceptions into a coherent whole (*Synthesis*).
11. Can understand abstractions and symbols and apply them to real situations (*Conceptual ability*).
12. Can state a value with conviction (about oneself, an idea, a position, group or cause) and can place that within a system of values (*Valuing*).
13. Has formulated an "internal yardstick" for judging one's own life and work (*Self-evaluation*).
14. Can combine different ideas of conceptions so as to form wholly new insights, greater than the sum of their parts (*Synergism*).
15. Can bring an imaginative approach to given situations and intellectual problems (*Creativity*).

- Definition
- Communication
- Documentation
- Analysis
- Comparison
- Implementation
- Logical Reasoning
- Judgement
- Problem-Solving Behavior
- Criticism and Evaluation
- Synthesis
- Conceptual Ability
- Valuing
- Self-evaluation
- Synergism
- Creativity

PART II: PORTFOLIO PREPARATION GUIDELINES
(Evidences: Forms of Documentation for Your Portfolio)

I. TRANSCRIPTS

A. Credit Courses taken at other Colleges and Universities.

To document competence gained in any credit course(s) taken at other colleges or universities, the student must submit an official transcript with the Registrar's Seal from those schools. There is usually both some lag time and fee for having your records sent, so it is advisable to do this as soon as possible. It may also be necessary for you to supplement your transcripts with course description(s), a syllabus or reading list if the course content is not self-evident from its title or number.

B. DePaul Courses (including SNL).

To demonstrate learning in any DePaul course, indicate clearly "DePaul transcript and the course title". SNL will refer to your official DePaul transcript, which we will send for if it is not already in your file.

C. Non-credit Course Work (e.g. In-service training, non-university continuing education, professional seminars, college or university work not-for-official-credit).

To receive recognition for any non-credit course work, the student must submit a syllabus outline, course description, or other indicator of course content and time spent, as well as an evaluation (from the instructor, personnel office or appropriate source) of the student's performance and the learning outcomes of that experience. The more detailed the description, the more chance an evaluator has to understand the content and the level of the learning experience. For example, if there are external guidelines (e.g. accreditation, endorsement of agencies, affiliation with professional organizations) these should be noted by the student and when possible corroborated by statements from the sponsoring organization.

For all courses, it is the responsibility of the student to do the match-up of courses to competencies. While the evaluation staff will give you recognition when they see appropriate courses on your transcripts, even if you have not made the claim, the more thorough you are in presenting your experiences and making a case for yourself, the more likely the evaluators will be to give you "all the credit that is due".

No grade of less than "C" or "Pass" is acceptable as demonstration of competence.

II. SCORES ON NATIONAL TESTS

A. CLEP Tests.

The most common national tests used to recognize prior learning for adults are the C.L.E.P. Tests (College Level Examination Program) from E.T.S. (the Educational Testing Service -- the people who also bring you SATs, LSATs, ACTs, MCATs, and GREs). There are two types of CLEPs -- the general categories (English Composition, Mathematics, Natural Sciences, Humanities, and Social Sciences - History), and specific content categories (such as Management, Psychology, History, Literature, Computers, Economics, etc.). SNL advises students with very little past college to take at least the general exams, as they can be a fairly painless (?) and inexpensive means of proving competence. The subject exams can also be used, but students should consult a SNL counselor before selecting particular subject areas.

SNL accepts a minimum score of 500 (out of a possible 800) for all the general exams. The minimum score for the specific content exams is unique to each one. The test scores can be sent directly to you or to SNL originally, but SNL must have on file an official report of your score.

Further information on these tests is available at the SNL offices and there are several decent study manuals you can purchase at most Chicago bookstores.

B. Credit-by-Examination at DePaul.

DePaul University has a Credit-by-Exam program given by the traditional academic departments. Exams are available corresponding to some of the courses offered in such areas as foreign languages (which CLEP does not cover), business and commerce, liberal arts, sciences and education. A complete folder describing how to register is available from SNL. Students must register through SNL, though the exams will be administered and evaluated by individual departments. Fees for University tests are \$50.00 per test. Students wishing to use this form of evidence should see a SNL counselor to select appropriate exams. Failed tests carry no penalty, are not recorded, and with University approval may be retaken.

Other universities and community colleges also have credit-by-exam programs which can be acceptable and which may include subjects not covered in DePaul's program or by the CLEP tests. Again, students should consult a SNL counselor before taking these tests, but they must be arranged at the individual school. Official (registrar's) results must be included in the portfolio.

The minimum acceptable score for exams taken for credit at DePaul or at other colleges and universities is set by the department administering the exam.

C. Other.

For information on other standard tests as proofs (such as certification in your field or armed forces tests-USAFI) see a SNL counselor. Such decisions will depend on the student's goal, the standards and authority of the testing agency, and the relationship of the evaluation to college level standards.

III. DIPLOMAS, CERTIFICATES, AWARDS

All diplomas, certificates or awards (whether from schools, work, community agencies, or other) must be accompanied by a description of what the "piece of paper" represents. Materials describing the experience awarded, evaluating the student's performance, indicating the goals and standards of the agency, the amount of time spent gaining competence, and the credentials of the evaluators, must accompany documents in order to give them credence and meaning beyond the paper they are written on. Please, whenever possible, submit photocopies of your originals.

IV. PAPERS

There are two broad categories of papers that are acceptable for demonstrating SNL competences:

A. Papers with Outside References.

Some competencies by definition require papers that must refer to outside sources of expertise (ex: books, articles, monographs, interviews, etc.). These are competencies that call for academic, historical or theoretical content within recognized bodies of knowledge.

Some examples of this type of competency are

- CI-7
- HC-1
- QL-1 and 2
- QL-7
- DM-2
- SS-3.

When using outside sources, students must clearly discriminate between their own ideas and the restatement of others' ideas and use correct college documentation styles (quotations, footnotes, and bibliography). Students are strongly encouraged to refer to A Manual for Writers by K. Turabian, 4th ed., or the Harbrace College Handbook by John C. Hodges or to any accepted manual of style in preparing their papers.

It is also strongly suggested that students try to use at least one primary source as well as secondary source material(s) in writing this type of paper for their portfolios (i.e. read Sigmund Freud's own work as well as reviews of Freud's writings).

Length: Papers are evaluated on quality (thoroughness, organization, content, clarity) not by their length alone. However, it is highly unlikely that any content paper could possibly cover an entire competence in less than six pages. This is an estimation and not a hard and fast rule. On the other hand, excessive length does not guarantee acceptability. Factors such as: the student's goal, the student's subject matter, the writing style and overall quality of the portfolio are taken into account. Some exceptional individuals can write terse but pithy prose -- Be sure you are one of these before you submit a content paper that is less than six pages long. There is no maximum length.

When appropriate, you may certainly submit papers written in the past.

B. Personal Essays.

The second type of paper for portfolios is an essay. Many of the competencies require that you describe your own experiences, philosophies, values, perspectives, or assessments. Examples of these are: DM-5

SS-4
CI-8
HC-6
QL-8.

These competencies depend upon your own validation of your own vision or experience. Therefore, you do not have to refer to outside sources or references in writing them. However, it is essential that you somehow place your own statements in perspective, with some comparison to larger traditions or others' experiences, showing that your competence has some generalizability from the specific situations in which it was achieved. For example, if you describe your own philosophy of life, you should in some way describe how it compares to some traditional religion or philosophical outlooks.

Length: It is difficult to imagine an adequate, valid paper of this type that is less than six typewritten (or the equivalent) pages. Again, this is an individual judgement.

V. LETTERS OF TESTIMONY

Letters of testimony are the least favored forms of evidence as they are the least measurable by objective standards. In some cases, however, they are the only possible proofs of competencies. Here are some guidelines and suggestions for securing letters of testimony from supervisors, peers, colleagues, or friends:

--There must be two corroborating letters for competence to be awarded. (Or, if one letter is submitted, another form of documentation can serve as a second confirmation, e.g. a letter plus a paper.)

--The person(s) writing the letter should identify his or her relationship to you (supervisor, peer, subordinate, client, teacher, etc.) as well as his/her qualifications for commenting on your experience.

--Letters should not merely verify your experiences but should specify the learning outcomes in terms of knowledges, skills and attitudes. They should also not simply re-state or paraphrase the SNL competence statement.

--The writers of letters should describe both the quality and quantity of the specific activities which enabled them to evaluate and give testimony about your competence.

--Letters must describe the level of attainment or quality of competence in terms of college level criteria. (See the philosophy of criteria statement.)

--Letters should be used sparingly and only when there is no other available form of tangible evidence.

--Letters should be on letterhead or official stationery whenever possible and be dated and signed. You should make clear to the author that the letter written is one of verification and measurement, not recommendation.

--While one "expert" may verify more than one experience or competency, no one evidence should be over-used in any part of the portfolio.

IV. PERSONAL TESTIMONY

In some instances your own testimony may be the only form of corroborating proof of an experience. If so, be as complete and articulate as possible, applying the above guidelines to yourself. There must always be one other form of proof when personal description is used. Personal testimony will often accompany essays or products to describe the nature of the competence gained. For example, after submitting a montage of photographs, the student may submit a statement describing how they were taken, what theme(s) were being expressed, and how he or she evaluates the end-results.

Personal testimony is also often used as a second form of evidence when no other outside person can be found.

Length: Letters should probably be one to three pages although this varies a great deal with each individual case.

VII. EXAMPLES OF CURRENT OR PAST PERFORMANCES

If the documentation which you plan to furnish is a product of your experience, such as a work sample or piece of art, you may find these guidelines helpful in deciding how to make your presentation:

--You should be ready to furnish proof that you did in fact produce the product which you are presenting. This may involve a supplemental letter of verification from someone who observed you in the process of producing the product.

--Some products may be too large, cumbersome, or valuable to include in a portfolio. In such cases it may be necessary to provide a photograph of the product and a statement of your willingness to bring the product to a college official or to take the college official to the product which you are using as documentation of your experience.

--You should provide a number and range of products sufficient to persuade the appropriate college officials that you did have the experience you claim.

--It is possible to furnish too much documentation. Remember that SNL is more concerned that you demonstrate your understanding of what you gained from your experiences, rather than an appendix that furnishes a "mountain" of documentation.

--The documentation should verify both the quality and quantity of your experience which you have had.

--Products which are included in your portfolio should be clearly labeled and should be signed and dated by you.

--Documentation probably will be considered to be public information. In other words, you should know that a number of individuals will look at documentation which you have furnished or which is furnished in your behalf. Persons providing letters of verification should be informed of this possibility.

Even if you attempt to trim down the amount of documentation, some individual specimens may be quite long. You should underline those parts of the document relevant to the claimed learning outcomes with a colored pen.

--Whenever possible, do not submit the only copy of the work. Send in a photocopy or keep a copy of your own. All originals such as art work, photography, pamphlets, films or tapes can be returned to you eventually but SNL does not want to have responsibility for guarding treasured, precious, or irreplaceable items.

--All documentation should be complete and should speak for itself. Oral interviews (face-to-face) are not possible. It is the responsibility of students to present proofs in a coherent, organized and accessible portfolio.

SUMMARY OF HOW TO PUT TOGETHER YOUR PORTFOLIO

At this point, let us turn to the practical considerations related to pulling together the paper work to facilitate and support your request for credit and recognition. It will be to your advantage to prepare a portfolio for the following reasons:

1. A fully developed portfolio will help you organize your thinking and planning to insure that you don't leave out something important.
2. A comprehensive and logically developed portfolio will help an evaluator to understand what you have learned, how you have learned it, and why you think you deserve the credit or recognition you are requesting.
3. If you keep a copy of the portfolio, you will find many important uses for it in the future, e.g. job hunting, self-analysis, etc.

The better your product from this process, the more likely you are to achieve such benefits of the assessment processes:

1. maximizing the credit or recognition you will receive for your prior experiential learning:
2. gaining a realistic appraisal of your present levels of competence:
3. possessing accurate information for planning future learning:
4. acquiring an understanding of how to measure learning outcomes (competencies--knowledge, skills, and values).

GENERAL SUGGESTIONS FOR PORTFOLIO PREPARATION

1. It is to your advantage to present a well-organized, coherent, logical portfolio of evidences.
 - Include an index of all evidences.
 - Indicate clearly which proofs apply to which competencies.
 - Whenever possible, include photocopies rather than originals (except when otherwise indicated).
 - Present your portfolio in its completed form. Wait until you have everything before submitting it.
2. In developing your portfolio plan, keep these principles of life experience evaluation in mind:
 - SNL does not award competencies for experience itself, but rather for the demonstrated learning which has resulted from the experience.
 - Preparing a portfolio is in itself an important self-assessment learning experience.
 - Developing your portfolio will call for some risk-taking and decision-making on your part. You should always view portfolio decisions in light of your future goals and new learning styles. Ask yourself:
 - Do I have this competency? At college level?
 - How can I prove it?
 - Is it worthwhile proving?
 - How does it relate to my goal?
 - Do I have to attain it in my New Learning Pact anyway?

3. When you enter into this process you agree to participate in mutually negotiated judgements.

You are responsible for determining your own level of competence and for gathering and organizing appropriate evidences. SNL is responsible for the evaluation of these evidences according to its competence framework and the stated philosophical criteria of college-level work.

Hopefully, we can enter this process with mutual respect and tolerance for the different roles of student and evaluators.

4. Life Experience Evaluation Policies.

--It takes eight weeks from the date of submitting a completed portfolio to receiving the report.

--Appeal policies and procedures.

- a. Students may disagree with some decisions. While evaluations are final, there is always room for error (evaluators are human). Appeals will be considered in cases where the student feels that pieces of evidence submitted in the portfolio have been overlooked or incorrectly interpreted by the evaluators. While it may occasionally happen that a student will disagree with a large number of the decisions made, it is more common that the disagreements will be in regard to a few specific portfolio evidences. What is important in preparing an appeal is that the student consider carefully the reasons given for the decisions made by the evaluators and respond to those reasons in stating their disagreement(s).
- b. All appeals of LEE decisions must now be made to the LEE team rather than the student's committee. These appeals must be made within 4 weeks of the receipt of the portfolio evaluation by the student.
- c. All appeals must be made in WRITING and must specify exactly which competence decisions are being challenged and why the student feels that the evidences presented in the portfolio demonstrated the competency in question.
- d. Decisions on appeals will be made by an Appeal Board composed of members of the SNL evaluation team. Decisions made by this Board will be final unless new evidence is provided to the Appeal Board. For this reason, it is recommended that students finalize any LEE appeals before their New Learning Pact is drawn up in detail.

- e. The appeal board will notify the student of their decision(s) within 2 weeks from the time that the written appeal and supplementary evidences (if any) are received at SNL.

*****It is important to note that, in the end, it is self-evaluation that counts, and a student will take away only what he or she puts into the educational process.

*****It's your education. We hope you will do well by yourself.
Good luck in preparing your portfolio and New Learning Pact.

COMPETENCIES AND FACETS

This document presents the competence framework of the School for New Learning, including the descriptive facets for each competence statement. Grouped into five broad categories (The World of Work, Communications and Interpersonal Relations, The Human Community, Quality of Life and Life, and Lifelong Learning), there are 48 individual competencies which each B.A. student must demonstrate in order to complete the degree program. These competencies provide the structure for the entire SNL experience; indeed, all learning experiences at the School are designed to help students achieve these competencies. The competencies are skills, knowledges, attitudes and values which are stated in general terms, but are translated into specific areas of content in each student's program and in the SNL course offerings.

In this paper, all competence statements are underlined. The five facets, listed as A through E, are not mandatory but rather descriptive -- clarifying a range of possible valid directions for interpreting each competence. For most competencies, at least two facets should be present to demonstrate college-level achievement. For others, all facets may be present. Still other possibilities may involve faculty members or students creating their own facets, enhancing the range of meanings within the generalist competence approach.

This presentation represents a concept at the heart of the SNL approach: that the competence framework should give shape and meaning to the Bachelor's Degree, as well as inspire the flexibility and creativity to respond to the unique educational needs of each adult learner.

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Please note: For purposes of style, SNL uses the third person pronoun one's rather than his or her. The following statements complete the sentence "The competent student..."

THE WORLD OF WORK: DEVELOPING AND MANAGING ORGANIZATIONS (DM)

1. Can seek and apply for a job.

- A. Can present job-related skills through a written resumé or vita.
- B. Can present job-related skills through a personal interview.
- C. Has a clear concept of the desired job.
- D. Can utilize a range of resources to conduct a job search.
- E. Can evaluate the appropriateness of the job for oneself.

2. Knows management theories and practices.

- A. Knows the history of management theory.
- B. Can compare and contrast at least two modern theories of management.
- C. Can explain how two alternative management theories would interpret one organizational case study.
- D. Can apply the principles of one management theory to an actual organizational setting.
- E. Can describe how roles, responsibilities and functions differ at different levels of the managerial structure.

3. Understands how organizations operate and can develop a plan for improving or changing an organization.
 - A. Knows at least two theories that explain how organizations operate.
 - B. Knows at least two approaches for changing or improving organizations.
 - C. Knows methods of increasing effectiveness of communications within an organization.
 - D. Can define the need for changing or improving an organization and can develop and implement a plan for doing so.
 - E. Can evaluate the success or failure of the approach for achieving change.

4. Understands how economic factors influence one financial decision-making problem.
 - A. Understands economic principles.
 - B. Can trace the historical development of at least two economic theories.
 - C. Can explain how one school of economic theory explains economic behavior (e.g. inflation, recession, "boom").
 - D. Can administer and use information derived from budgets, accounting records or other systems of financial record-keeping.
 - E. Can evaluate the information gained from reading a budget and use it to make decisions compatible with organizational objectives.

5. Knows alternative leadership styles and their appropriate applications and can evaluate one's own style in a work setting.
 - A. Knows at least two leadership theories.
 - B. Can identify one's own leadership style (in various settings).
 - C. Can delegate responsibility and authority.
 - D. Can apply at least one method of fostering participation in organizations.
 - E. Can evaluate the role of employees, colleagues, employers or oneself in achieving organizational objectives.

6. Knows the theories and methods of personnel management.
 - A. Knows at least two current approaches to personnel management.
 - B. Knows one method of recruiting and selecting personnel.
 - C. Knows laws governing personnel practices.
 - D. Knows one method of evaluating employee performance.
 - E. Can evaluate whether personnel decisions made in an organization have maximized utilization of human resources.

7 and 8.

At least two additional competencies will be negotiated on an individual basis by each committee from the following suggested pool of topics: law, labor relations, personnel, marketing, public relations, production, planning, economics, finance or accounting.

9 and 10.

At least two additional, in-depth, "higher level" competencies in this area must be developed by the student and his/her committee to help achieve the individual goal(s).

THE WORLD OF WORK: SOCIAL SERVICE (SS)

1. Can seek and apply for a job.

- A. Can present job-related skills through a written resumé or vita.
- B. Can present job-related skills through a personal interview.
- C. Has a clear concept of the desired job.
- D. Can utilize a range of resources to conduct a job search.
- E. Can evaluate the appropriateness of the job for oneself.

2. Understands the role of a social service agency in relationship to the community it serves and to other agencies.

- A. Understands the concept of the term "community" and can apply this concept in describing a specific community.
- B. Can describe the relationship between an agency and its community.
- C. Knows how to use the resources of the agency, the community and other agencies for social service problem-solving.
- D. Can use the resources in the interests of the client for maximizing human dignity.
- E. Can build working relationships with colleagues within the agency, the community and with other social service agencies and/or communities.

3. Understands how at least two theories of sociology explain human behavior.

- A. Knows the historical development of the field of sociology.
- B. Knows at least two theoretical frameworks used by sociologists to explain human behavior.
- C. Understands sociological concepts and vocabulary (e.g. class, ethnicity, role, community).
- D. Knows how to use one sociological method for investigating human behavior (e.g. interviews, questionnaires, demographics, observation).
- E. Can explain how two sociological theories would explain one social behavior (e.g. racism, gangs, crime).

4. Can describe one's own social service values in working with clients or communities to help them solve problems.

- A. Can describe one's own working style and values as a social service worker.
- B. Can assess the client's(s') needs for social service support.
- C. Can propose a range of alternative solutions.
- D. Can work with clients in implementing a solution that reduces barriers and creates alternatives.
- E. Can evaluate the solution(s) using client-centered criteria.

5. Can conduct client interviews, and record and use the information gained for social service problem-solving.
 - A. Can use interviewing techniques to elicit information from the client(s).
 - B. Can establish the environment necessary to obtain the desired information.
 - C. Can write reports and maximize access and usability of records.
 - D. Can make generalizations from the data for problem-solving and communication.
 - E. Can maintain the integrity, confidentiality and legality of the information.

6. Can function as a member of a social service team (or colleague group).
 - A. Can apply the perspective(s) of one social science discipline (e.g. psychology, sociology, anthropology).
 - B. Can assess which social science disciplines (e.g. law, economics, education, political science, health) are applicable in understanding one problem.
 - C. Knows when a multi-disciplinary team approach or group effort is necessary.
 - D. Can take an active role in contributing to team or small group interaction.
 - E. Can evaluate the success of a team or small group in achieving its stated goals.

7 and 8.

At least two additional competencies will be negotiated on an individual basis by each committee from the following suggested pool of topics: agency administration, case methods, group dynamics, psychology, sociology, community development, fundraising or public health.

9 and 10.

At least two additional, in-depth, "higher level" competencies in this area must be developed by the student and his/her committee to help achieve individual goal(s).

THE WORLD OF WORK: PROFESSIONAL PREPARATION (PP)

1. Can seek and apply for a job.

- A. Can present job-related skills through a written resumé or vita.
- B. Can present job-related skills through a personal interview.
- C. Has a clear concept of the desired job.
- D. Can utilize a range of resources to conduct a job search.
- E. Can evaluate the appropriateness of the job for oneself.

2 through 8.

At least seven additional competencies will be negotiated on an individual basis by each committee.

9 and 10.

At least two additional, in-depth "higher level" competencies in this area must be developed by the student and his/her committee to help achieve the individual goal(s).

COMMUNICATIONS AND INTERPERSONAL RELATIONS (CI)

1. Can read, write and speak English.

- A. Can speak, write and organize logical sentences and paragraphs, with clear intended messages, using standard English to express ideas and concepts.
- B. Knows a range of vocabularies (e.g. standard usage, technical, idiomatic and academic) and can use them appropriately to express literal and abstract meaning.
- C. Can discriminate between one's own ideas and the restatement of others' ideas and can use appropriate forms of documentation when necessary.
- D. Knows the purposes of a variety of written and oral forms and can use them appropriately (e.g. report writing, essays, term papers).
- E. Can evaluate a piece of written communication for effectiveness.

2. Can use one means of communication other than English.

- A. Knows the vocabulary and/or elements of the means of communication.
- B. Can understand messages from the communications medium of language.
- C. Can make statements in the medium with clear intended messages.
- D. Understands some common features of all linguistic communication.
- E. Can compare the communications value of the medium to English.

3. Can demonstrate critical faculties of analysis, comparison and evaluation in understanding the elements of form, content and style.
 - A. Can trace a line of logical thought.
 - B. Can analyze the relationship between style and content in a single work.
 - C. Can identify the informational and emotional outcomes evoked by a single work.
 - D. Can compare the effects of form, content and style in multiple works.
 - E. Can recognize how the communicator's point of view is expressed in a work.

4. Knows how to use information sources (e.g. libraries, experts, museums, media) to answer questions.
 - A. Can pose appropriate questions.
 - B. Can identify and evaluate a variety of sources.
 - C. Knows a variety of methods for gathering information and can select an appropriate one.
 - D. Can judge whether the information gathered was adequate to answer question(s) posed.
 - E. Understands the implications of information gained from different sources.

5. Understands the concept of symbolism in communication.

- A. Can analyze how one object, idea or cue represents multiple meanings in any form of communication.
- B. Can name symbols in one medium and understands both their common and personal meanings.
- C. Can evaluate the effectiveness in communication of a specific symbol.
- D. Can use symbols appropriate to the desired communication.
- E. Understands how symbolism can be used to manipulate the response of the participant.

6. Understands the role and impact of mass media in society.

- A. Can define the concept of mass media.
- B. Can compare the strengths and limitations of at least two mass media for communicating messages.
- C. Can evaluate the impact of mass media in society.
- D. Can present a comprehensive analysis of one medium.
- E. Can defend or refute the value that citizens should take responsibility for the quality of the mass media.

7. Can interpret behavioral responses in terms of at least two theories of psychology.
- A. Understands the need to view behavior in a coherent conceptual framework and the elements common to psychological theories.
 - B. Can describe at least two recognized theories of psychology.
 - C. Can observe and describe behavioral patterns among individuals.
 - D. Can evaluate the strengths and limitations of at least two psychological theories in explaining human or animal behavior(s).
 - E. Can describe how at least two theories of psychology would interpret the same behavior(s).

8. Can diagnose breakdowns in interpersonal communication and apply means to reduce such barriers.
- A. Knows one's own style of giving information to others and how it helps or hinders communication.
 - B. Knows elements of non-verbal communication.
 - C. Can analyze setting, style and intended audience and use this analysis in communicating a message.
 - D. Can explain the ways in which feedback in communication can affect changes in behavior.
 - E. Knows various methods of reducing barriers in communication and can implement one method.

9 and 10.

At least two additional, in-depth, "higher level" competencies in this area must be developed by the student and his/her committee to help achieve your individual goal(s).

THE HUMAN COMMUNITY (HC)

1. Understands the political, cultural or economic system(s) which one society has used to govern itself.
 - A. Can analyze how culture, government and economics can interact in one society.
 - B. Can name the key figures and understands the historical development of one political, cultural or economic system.
 - C. Can define the needs which caused people to order their societies.
 - D. Can describe how laws, customs or rituals reflect a society's values.
 - E. Can compare theoretical aspects of law, government or economics to their actual practices in one setting.

2. Understands how historical, economic and political factors and powerful individuals affect world affairs.
 - A. Recognizes points of view that historians or economists or political scientists have used in analyzing one historical or current event.
 - B. Can analyze how historical, political, economic and personality factors interact within one historical or current event.
 - C. Can trace the economic, political or historical origin of a particular event.
 - D. Can evaluate the effectiveness of decisions made to resolve problems in current or past affairs.
 - E. Knows at least one method used in the fields of history, economics or political science to analyze events.

3. Understands the interrelationships between humans, animals and the physical world.
 - A. Knows evolutionary theories of humans, animals and the physical world.
 - B. Knows the components necessary to sustain a living environment.
 - C. Understands how organisms (e.g. humans, animals, plants) are structured and function.
 - D. Can analyze at least one current issue in man's use of his physical environment.
 - E. Can analyze the energy resources needed to sustain a "chain of life."

4. Can define how scientific ideas or technologies can affect society (e.g. lifestyles, governments, art, commerce, education, religion, information systems).
 - A. Understands the method of scientific inquiry
 - B. Can analyze how scientific discoveries are implemented in technology.
 - C. Can describe how society's needs are influenced by technology.
 - D. Can analyze how one major scientific discovery related to the needs of the society in which it occurred.
 - E. Understands the roles of the scientist in modern society.

5. Can analyze how at least two of the following characteristics -- race, ethnicity, nationality, age, sex and religion -- interact to shape the individual and communities.
 - A. Can define a concept of community.
 - B. Understands how individual behavior is affected by membership within a community.
 - C. Can compare at least two communities in terms of race, ethnicity, nationality, age, sex or religion.
 - D. Can determine how these factors can influence personality characteristics of individual(s).
 - E. Can evaluate one's own cultural stereotypes and understands how they can affect judgements of individuals or groups.

6. Can plan one method of change within a community and assess the positive and negative effects of it.
 - A. Can define a concept of community and describe the features of one existing community.
 - B. Can define a need for change within a community (e.g. work, community, social group, neighborhood, country).
 - C. Knows various methods for effecting community change (e.g. financial, political, social).
 - D. Can plan one method for effecting change.
 - E. Can evaluate the plan's potential for effecting change, both positive and negative.

7. Can analyze how social, economic, political or historical factors affect one urban or suburban problem.
- A. Understands sociological factors of a metropolitan setting.
 - B. Understands economic factors of a metropolitan setting.
 - C. Understands political factors of a metropolitan setting.
 - D. Knows the history of urban/suburban development.
 - E. Can apply economic, political, sociological or historical theory(ies) to one problem within the urban or suburban setting.

8. Understands what factors can make an urban, suburban or rural setting a viable way of life.

- A. Can state reasons for choosing a particular urban, suburban or rural lifestyle.
- B. Can state how neighborhoods, downtown areas, and suburbs interact to produce a metropolitan setting.
- C. Can compare the role of the individual in decision-making processes in the urban, suburban or rural setting.
- D. Understands how current policy decisions can affect the future for city, suburban or rural life.
- E. Can articulate or refute the need for long-range planning in regard to one current metropolitan problem.

9 and 10.

At least two additional in-depth, "higher level" competencies in this area must be developed by the student and his/her committee to help achieve the individual goal(s).

QUALITY OF LIFE (QL)

1. and 2.

Can demonstrate familiarity with the vocabulary, history and criticism of two art forms (e.g. dance, opera, theater, cinema, music, literature, painting, sculpture, architecture).

- A. Can define important terms in the vocabulary of the art.
- B. Knows the developmental stages of the art forms.
- C. Can analyze the relationship of a specific movement in an art form to the cultural milieu in which it happened.
- D. Knows the contributions of major artists within the art forms.
- E. Knows the vocabulary of criticism.

3. Can express an idea or theme in one art form.

- A. Has mastered the basic techniques and tools of the art and has control of the medium at an acceptable level of craftsmanship.
- B. Has had a significant role in creating the design elements of the work.
- C. Can purposely invest the piece with meaning (can state the pre-determined goals).
- D. Can evaluate the success of the piece in terms of form, style and function.
- E. Knows a range of ideas or themes that can be expressed through a specific art form.

4. Understands how the design of objects (e.g. furniture, machines, clothes) or environments (e.g. rooms, buildings, cities) affects their function and can enhance the quality of life for those people who experience them.

- A. Understands how the relationship of form and function contributes to the beauty of an object.
- B. Understands how the relationship of form and function contributes to the quality of an environment.
- C. Can name design elements which determine the aesthetic quality of an object or an environment.
- D. Understands the interaction between an object and its surroundings.
- E. Can compare and contrast the elements of man-made designs to designs found in nature.

5. Understands how leisure activities affect the quality of life for oneself and for groups.

- A. Can define the characteristics which determine whether an activity is "leisure" or "work".
- B. Can define how groups within this culture use their leisure time.
- C. Can compare one's own choice of leisure activities to other possible leisure activities.
- D. Can define renewal for oneself.
- E. Can evaluate one's own level of involvement in a leisure activity and can assess the implications for renewal.

6. Knows at least two re-creational or cultural resources available in the metropolitan area and can evaluate their positive and negative contributions to the quality of metropolitan life (e.g. museums, parks, zoos, concerts, libraries, lectures, art galleries).
 - A. Can define needs for re-creational resources within a metropolitan area.
 - B. Understands how re-creational resources are managed.
 - C. Can compare the value of one re-creational resource to other similar resources.
 - D. Can participate in and evaluate the options available (e.g. exhibits, libraries, gift shops, classes, educational programs) within one re-creational resource.
 - E. Understands the importance of citizen involvement in the maintenance and development of re-creational resources.

7. Understands at least two different theological or philosophical systems that groups use to give meaning to their lives.
 - A. Can describe two theological or philosophical systems of thought.
 - B. Can trace the historical impact of these two systems upon society(ies).
 - C. Can compare the two systems for their ideas and their contributions to society(ies).
 - D. Can analyze the relationship between the theories and practices of each system.
 - E. Can name key people and their ideas within the two systems.

8. Can articulate a personal philosophy and describe how it gives meaning to one's own life.
- A. Understands the characteristics of one's own philosophical, ethical, ideological or spiritual position(s).
 - B. Understands the effects of this position(s) on one's life.
 - C. Can trace the origin of one's philosophical, ethical, ideological or spiritual position(s).
 - D. Understands the interrelationships between one's experiences and one's philosophical, ethical, ideological or spiritual position(s).
 - E. Can compare one's position(s) to widely held philosophical, ethical, ideological or spiritual positions.

9. and 10.

At least two additional, in-depth, "higher level" competencies in this area must be developed by the student and his/her committee to help achieve the individual goal(s).

LIFELONG LEARNING (LL) (SNL B.A. Process)

1. Can articulate short-term life goals, understands their long-term implications, and can plan the educational strategies to achieve them.

(Discovery Workshop)

- A. Understands why educational goal-setting is important.
- B. Can evaluate one's learning habits and knows the implications of them.
- C. Can define and write an educational goal.
- D. Can plan and implement a strategy(ies) to achieve one's goal(s).
- E. Understands the relationship between short-term educational objectives and achievement of long-term goals.

2. Can evaluate the knowledge, skills and attitudes gained from life experiences and relate them to life goals.

(Life Experience Evaluation)

- A. Can select from life experiences the knowledge, skills and attitudes relevant to life goals.
- B. Can elicit evidences of competency from appropriate resources.
- C. Can coherently present evidences of competency.
- D. Can organize evidences into a unified presentation.
- E. Can use feedback from others to revise the presentation of evidences.

3. Can develop educational goals and strategies and negotiate them with others.

(New Learning Committee)

- A. Is aware of one's learning style(s).
- B. Can select an appropriate resource person or group with which to work.
- C. Can communicate with the person or group and achieve consensus.
- D. Can write a learning contract containing goals, strategies, evaluation criteria and techniques.
- E. Can evaluate the outcomes with respect to the contract(s) and one's individual goals.

4. Can elicit and provide constructive criticism and use the insights gained in making decisions about oneself.

(3 SNL Courses and Major Seminar)

- A. Knows what self-evaluation questions need to be answered.
- B. Knows a range of methods for seeking and giving constructive criticism.
- C. Can select an appropriate method for seeking and giving constructive criticism.
- D. Can use the information gained for making personal growth or helping others grow.
- E. Can evaluate the positive and negative aspects of the method used to give or get criticism.

5. Can apply knowledge, skills and attitudes learned in formal education or training to a field setting.

(Internship)

- A. Can assess the meaning of work for oneself and others.
- B. Understands one's role and the role of others in a work setting.
- C. Can apply knowledge, skills or attitudes to achieve change in a field setting.
- D. Can learn from others in a field setting.
- E. Can describe the affective environment of the work setting.

6. Can plan, implement and evaluate an independent learning project which reflects in-depth competence in a specific content area.

(Major Piece of Work)

- A. Can define a major project and state objectives for achieving it.
- B. Can survey existing information on how the problem has been considered in the past.
- C. Can outline strategies.
- D. Can use resources in implementing the plan.
- E. Can evaluate the project outcomes.

7. Understands the educational factors (academic and life experiences) that affect one's identity throughout life.

(Final Evaluation)

- A. Can write a personal history (autobiography) that highlights key points of one's growth, aging and renewal.
- B. Understands how intellectual growth (knowledge, skills and attitudes) has affected one's identity.
- C. Knows at least one theory of human development (physical or emotional growth, aging and renewal).
- D. Can compare and contrast one's own patterns of growth to the patterns of others.
- E. Can assess how one's past and present identities can influence one's future development.

8. Understands why renewal is vital for both the individual and society and can plan strategies for becoming a lifelong learner.

(Summit Seminar)

- A. Can define the key characteristics that give meaning to one's personal life (e.g. work, family, lifestyle).
- B. Can state the goals for changing or maintaining levels of personal satisfaction (self-renewal).
- C. Can define the role of the individual as an agent of change or renewal within the larger society.
- D. Understands how individual lifelong learning is related to societal renewal, growth and change.
- E. Can implement a plan for individual renewal based upon an evaluation of one's past learning experiences.