One Hundred and Twenty-Sixth Report of the Curricular Affairs Committee: Recommendation #1, Arts and Sciences Ad Hoc Committee on General Education

University of Rhode Island Faculty Senate

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UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND
Kingston, Rhode Island

FACULTY SENATE
BILL

Adopted by the Faculty Senate

TO: President Frank Newman

FROM: Chairman of the Faculty Senate

1. The attached BILL, titled One Hundred and Twenty-Sixth Report of the Curricular Affairs Committee: Recommendation #1, Arts and Sciences Ad Hoc Committee on General Education, is forwarded for your consideration.

2. The original and two copies for your use are included.

3. This BILL was adopted by vote of the Faculty Senate on March 24, 1977.

4. After considering this bill, will you please indicate your approval or disapproval. Return the original or forward it to the Board of Regents, completing the appropriate endorsement below.

5. In accordance with Section 8, paragraph 2 of the Senate's By-Laws, this bill will become effective on April 14, 1977, three weeks after Senate approval, unless: (1) specific dates for implementation are written into the bill; (2) you return it disapproved; (3) you forward it to the Board of Regents for their approval; or (4) the University Faculty petitions for a referendum. If the bill is forwarded to the Board of Regents, it will not become effective until approved by the Board.

March 25, 1977
(dated)

Daniel P. Bergen
Chairman of the Faculty Senate

ENDORSEMENT

TO: Chairman of the Faculty Senate

FROM: President of the University

1. Returned.

2. Approved __________. Disapproved __________.

3. (If approved) In my opinion, transmittal to the Board of Regents is not necessary.

(date)

(If approved) __________ President

Form revised 6/74
ALTERNATE ENDORSEMENT 1.

TO: Chairman of the Board of Regents

FROM: The University President

1. Forwarded.

2. Approved.

(date) President

ENDORSEMENT 2.

TO: Chairman of the Faculty Senate

FROM: Chairman of the Board of Regents, via the University President.

1. Forwarded.

(date) (Office)

ENDORSEMENT 3.

TO: Chairman of the Faculty Senate

FROM: The University President

1. Forwarded from the Chairman of the Board of Regents.

(date) President

Original received and forwarded to the Secretary of the Senate and Registrar for filing in the Archives of the University.

(date) Chairman of the Faculty Senate
One Hundred and Twenty-Sixth Report of the Curricular Affairs Committee: Recommendation #1, Arts and Sciences Ad Hoc Committee on General Education.

College of Arts and Sciences

1. Ad Hoc Committee on General Education

   a. The Curricular Affairs Committee recommends that the Arts and Sciences Ad Hoc Committee on General Education be authorized to offer the following course and that during the experimental period, students from all colleges be selected in line with an experimental design to be developed by the Ad Hoc Committee on General Education and the CRDC:

   ATS 100X Learning to Think Critically 1 or II, 6
   Identification of methods of analytical thinking common to problem solving in various disciplines, and practical experience in their application. (Lec. 6) Pre: Permission of course coordinator. Limited to freshmen. Staff

   (approved by the Faculty Senate on February 24, 1977)

   b. The Curricular Affairs Committee presents the following temporary course to the Faculty Senate for information:

   EDC/PHL 100X Reading and Reasoning 1 or II, 3
   Introduction to the reading reasoning skills necessary for the comprehension of written materials. Provides students with the intellectual skills for independent learning and general academic performance. (Lec. 3) Concurrent registration in SCRATCH W required. Subsequent registration in SPE 101 expected. Pre: Permission of course coordinator. Limited to freshmen. Not open to students who have passed PHL 101. McGuire and Kowalski

   c. The Curricular Affairs Committee recommends that the time limitation for temporary courses in section 8.41.13 of the University Manual be waived for ATS 100X and EDC/PHL 100X to allow the courses to be offered four times in two successive years.

   The Arts and Sciences Ad Hoc Committee on General Education has been directed to present an interim report on ATS 100X and EDC/PHL 100X in March, 1978 to the CAC.

   d. The Curricular Affairs Committee recommends that ATS 100X and EDC/PHL 100X apply to College of Arts and Science distribution requirements in the same manner as they are applied to the General Education requirements recommended by the University College and General Education Committee. (See Senate Bill #76-77--28)
A Course in Analytical Thinking Skills

RATIONALE

In the fall of 1974 the Arts and Sciences Faculty established an Ad Hoc Committee to study general education. In an interim report dated May 20, 1975, this committee chaired by Professor Stanley Pickart defined general education as a set of skills, attitudes, experiences, and knowledge that every educated person should have. The committee urged that general education avoid premature specialization and allow for maximum flexibility. General education should emphasize those skills needed by the individual to function well in society and to continue learning throughout life.

In a second report the Ad Hoc Committee identified the ability to think analytically as an essential skill college graduates should have. The committee suggested that three subcommittees be formed, one of which would be charged with developing a pilot, experimental program intended to train students to develop their analytical thinking skills.

In a letter dated April 6, 1976, Dean Barry A. Marks charged the Subcommittee on Analytical Thinking Skills with designing a 6 credit experimental course whose primary aim would be to develop in students a competence in those analytical thinking techniques which are essential for the well-educated person. To be sure, the University already teaches these skills in a great variety of ways and settings, but it is possible that they can be taught more effectively "in a context where various analytical skills are taught together as part of a consciously designed package."

Responses to a questionnaire sent to the various departments in the College of Arts and Sciences late in the spring semester of 1976 seemed to confirm what the authors of a Report to the Commissioner of Education on "The Purposes of Postsecondary Education in Rhode Island" (Maury Klein and John McKee) wrote about traditional general education programs, namely that they are rarely "designed primarily or specifically" to imparting the necessary techniques for processing and mastering content matter (p. 54). Whereas the responses to the questionnaire indicated that analytical thinking skills are considered essential to learning, they nevertheless also revealed that in most general education courses the primary focus is on the acquisition of content, not on training in problem solving. The ability of the student to think critically, to analyze from various perspectives is taken for granted.

The aim of the pilot course here being proposed is to identify for students common types of analytical thinking, and to provide for them a conceptual framework for and training in the analytical approach to the issues, ideas, and problems of various fields. This course is by no means intended to be remedial, since learning for all college students, whatever their age or intellectual ability, should involve further clarification and refinement of critical thinking as a major intellectual and functional activity of the individual.
The emphasis of the proposed course is on training in proper methodology rather than on content. Since method cannot be learned without matter, however, the committee proposes using material from the natural sciences, the social sciences, and the humanities—areas which are traditionally associated with a general education. The individual faculty members teaching the various segments will be responsible for creating learning experiences designed to foster critical thinking skills.

Because of the diversity of disciplines to which a student is exposed in the University, he frequently loses sight of the fact that in spite of the vast differences in content, there are important similarities in the methods used to solve problems no matter what the disciplines. The analytical methods employed by the literary critic are not dissimilar to those used by the biologist. Whether we are dealing with a problem on the printed page or one isolated in a test tube, proper method of analysis has to be followed in order to be able to draw valid conclusions. Hence, one major emphasis of the course is to be commonality of method, i.e., the course is intended to enable students to recognize common elements, common patterns in models from various disciplines, but at the same time also the intrinsic differences among the various modes of expression.

Another characteristic of the course is to be flexibility. Although the content for problem solving is to be drawn from the humanities, the natural sciences, and the social sciences, the specific disciplines in these three areas which will provide content as well as instructors can change from semester to semester. The stable elements of the course will be the introductory segment providing the conceptual framework; a language segment, since the ability to read critically is an objective of the initial courses in almost every area of study; a mathematics segment, since mathematics is a central tool in practically every natural science and in many social sciences; a concluding "coordinating seminar" whose major function will be to provide a synthesis for the course.

Although the committee at this point proposes only a 6 cr. course in analytical thinking skills as an alternate, experimental approach to providing some of the credits toward fulfilling the general education requirements, the committee realizes that such a course is only a beginning, an initial attempt in providing a problem-solving or methodology-oriented approach to general education. The committee recognizes the need for evaluating the desirability of such an approach and of considering whether further, expanded implementation is warranted. Should the pattern proposed here prove effective and desirable, it could easily be expanded into an additional course in the future. On the other hand, it might be preferable to present to the students various alternatives after they have taken the introductory course which is here being proposed, such as a choice of specific areas for further and more intensive problem solving.

The committee proposes that the group enrolled in this analytical thinking course as well as a control group be tested prior to the beginning of the course as well as at the end of the semester as a method of evaluating the effectiveness of this approach to general education. Various tests available for this purpose will be investigated during the course of this academic year.

Subcommittee on Analytical Thinking Skills

Paul Cohen
Richard Katula
James Kowalski
Marianne Kalinke
Norman Finizio
Nelson Smith
PROPOSAL

1. **GED 100X: Learning to Think Critically I and II, 6 each**
   
   Identification of methods of analytical thinking common to problem solving in various disciplines, and practical experience in their application. (Lec. 6) Staff

2. Expected distribution:

   Freshman 100%

   The course is designed for approximately 80 students in its trial run.

3. Place of course in curriculum

   The course is intended as an experimental, alternate approach to providing 6 credits toward fulfilling the general education requirements. The six credits may be distributed by students in Division A, B, C with 3 cr. in each of two of the three divisions.

4. Overlap

   Most courses which are content-oriented are taught on the assumption that students have the ability to analyze, to question, to solve intellectual problems. The primary aim of this course is to train students in the methodology of problem solving. Inasmuch as the problems proposed will be drawn from the natural sciences, the social sciences, and the humanities there will be intentional overlap. However, this course is not intended to take the place of introductory courses in any discipline, but rather serves to prepare students to perform better in the traditional content-oriented courses, and ultimately to prepare students to continue learning throughout life.

5. New facilities required:

   None anticipated. We expect to be able to draw upon resources already available.

6. Availability of personnel:

   The course will be team-taught. The following instructors will be involved in teaching the course in the Fall, 1977: J. Kowalski (Philosophy), M. Briggs (History), Nelson Smith (Psychology), N. Finizio (Mathematics), Roberta Tutt (English), Marianne Kalinke (Languages), S. Pickart (Physics). Marianne Kalinke has been charged with coordinating the course.

7. Date when course will first be offered:

   Fall, 1977
Course Outline

The various segments are presented below in outline form. The outlines are prepared as suggestions, as possible approaches in each discipline. They are tentative and subject to revision as the course evolves in the planning sessions. The instructors of each segment (in cooperation with those in other segments) will generate their own materials, materials that will reflect and support the content of the introduction as well as the other segments. Each of the segments will consist of approximately 9-15 hours of classes.

1. The Conceptual Frame - (J. Kowalski - Philosophy)

Length of segment: Min. 11, Max. 15, 50 min class periods

UNIT I Getting off the ground
(2 periods) a. analytical and critical thinking, problem solving
    b. inferences - deductive and inductive

UNIT II Elements of Induction and Causal Reasoning
(3 periods) a. the necessary and the sufficient
    b. the canons of induction and experimental design

UNIT III Elements of Deduction
(2 periods) a. some basic relationships
    b. some basic reasoning patterns

UNIT IV Explanations - types, structures, and characteristics
(2 periods)

UNIT V Problem Solving
(3-5 periods) a. "scientific" methods
    b. "scientific" methods in "non-scientific" disciplines

2. Linguistics Analysis (R. Tutt-English) Length of segment: 9 - 12 class periods

Objective: The development of skills applicable to the analysis of written verbal constructs

I. Codes and ciphers

II. How the linguist works. Grammatical features analysis of an artificial language (Esperanto)
III. Grammatical features analysis of a natural language

IV. Application of "vertical" analytic techniques to English prose passage. Defining style.

V. Restructuring the patterns ("lateral" thinking). Riddles and puzzles.

VI. Proverbs; symbol and allegory

VII. Restructuring: figures of speech

VIII. Application of "vertical" and "lateral" thinking skills to analysis of prose and poetry

3. Critical Thinking Through Mathematics (N. Finizio) 12 periods

1. Inductive Reasoning: Guessing at next object in "Picture Patterns" (Introduction of Logical Argument.)

2. Inductive Reasoning: Guessing at next quantity in "Mathematical Patterns".

3. Deductive Reasoning: Coding Problems and Association of such with the Problem of Communicating with Intelligent Beings from Outer Space

4. Deductive Reasoning: Billiard Ball Problem I

5. Deductive Reasoning: Billiard Ball Problem II

6. Deductive Reasoning: Mathematical Proof I (Direct Proof)

7. Deductive Reasoning: Mathematical Proof II (Indirect Proof)

8. Deductive Reasoning: Mathematical Proof III (Equivalence)

9. Deductive Reasoning: Logical Argument I (Continued from Lecture I)

10. Deductive Reasoning: Logical Argument II

11. Basic Counting Techniques

12. Basic Probability Concepts
4. Historical Methodology (M. Briggs - History) 9 - 15 periods

Unit I. Something about history (3 periods, lecture-discussion).

1 period: History and historical systems.

1 period: Bias and Objectivity in historical writing.

1 period: The lingo of history. Thinking in the past tense.

Unit II. Practicum in historical criticism

6 to 12 periods: Consists in handouts or library assignments concerning conflicting reports on historical events. Students are to evaluate them. I have in mind several, but specific materials will have to be prepared.

1. The Hossback protocol.
   Evaluate it as a) evidence (admissibility) and b) substance.

2. The faces of Galileo.
   Galileo according to:
   
   Arthur Koestler.
   C. di Santillana.
   Bertolt Brecht.

3. Charles Darwin—according to:

   2. Loren Eiseley.

The class will do one such study every three sessions. The first class will be spent handing out the materials, giving the necessary background. The second will be optional, for whatever discussion might occur. The third will be the time when the evaluations are presented, in written form. Perhaps the class can be polled to see how many agree with each historical judgment. I would hope for a good deal of class participation.

5. Experimental Methods: The Natural Sciences (S. Pickart - Physics) 12 periods

Unit I. Case Histories

An introductory sequence treating several key historical developments in physics, emphasizing the logical imperative initiating the concept, the false starts, and the development of the final successful theory. The treatment will be conceptual rather than mathematical.

1. (2 periods) Newton's synthesis of the classical law of motion and general gravitation from Galileo's experiments and Kepler's phenomenological laws.
2. (2 periods) Origin of the quantum hypothesis and its development into a theory as a result of the failure of classical physics to account for subatomic phenomena.

3. (2 periods) Development of relativity theory by Einstein from the search for invariance of physical laws.

Unit II. Work and Discovery Sessions

Structured so as to allow the student to discover general principles from experimental data. Experience of the experimental method will be mimicked by providing the student with no questions and no answers, followed by post-mortems on success or failure in hypothesis formation.

1. (3 periods) Discovery of symmetry principle from analysis of geometric drawings that tessellate the plane. Expected outcome: appreciation of the role of mythology, imperfect solutions and perfect solutions based on the symmetry principle in scientific analysis.

2. (3 periods) Energy conservation principle from semi-quantitative data derived from measuring heat, mechanical and electrical energy. Leads to discussion of the role of science in societal problems.

6. Experimental Methods: The Social Sciences (N. Smith—Psychology) 9-12 50 min. sessions

Unit I. The goals and strategies of Psychology (2 sessions)

Encompasses the identification of the goals of Psychology and the strategies available along with the rationale for use of the scientific method as the strategy of choice.

Unit II. Heuristics: The Art and Science of Discovery (2 sessions)

Where do ideas for research in Psychology come from? Formulation of researchable questions from: 1) Previous experiments, 2) Technology, 3) Other disciplines, 4) Theories, 5) Serendipity.

Unit III. Tactics: Designing, Running and Analyzing Experiments (3 sessions)

Presentation of and discussion of the rudiments of: experimental design, confounding variables, control in experimentation, data analysis.

Unit IV. Logistics and Communication (1 or 2 sessions)

Presentation and discussion of ethical and legal restraints in experimentation in psychology, and the routes of communication of research findings.

Unit V. Practicum: Learning by doing (3 sessions)

This unit would involve an exercise in which the students would work through the process of analytical thinking and research in an area of psychology, probably social psychology.
7. **Literary Analysis - (M. Kalinke-Languages) 9 - 12 periods**

In this segment lecturing will be minimal; emphasis will be on textual analysis. The students will be presented with some common literary problems and allowed to discover for themselves some of the principles of literary criticism.

1. Distinction between language as a carrier of information alone and language as literature, i.e., as an art form. Inseparability of form and content.

2. Problem of unambiguous, universal concordance between words and things; are there "objective" or verifiable criteria of poetic exegesis? Case for varying interpretations of literature.

3. Problem of translating content into form
   a. semantics
   b. syntax
   c. structure
   d. genre

4. Approaches to reality
   a. lyric
   b. epic
   c. dramatic

5. Relationship of author to material
   a. auctorial narrative - tension between world of author and world of characters
   b. personal narrative - identification of author with characters
   c. neutral narrative situation

8. Coordinating seminar - all instructors
Background and Rationale for Proposed "Reading and Reasoning" Course

For the past year the Communication Skills Sub-committee of the Ad Hoc Committee on General Education of the College of Arts and Sciences has been studying the problems of our students' communication skills and of an effective program to develop those skills. The sub-committee postulates that the communications process is a continuum in which mastery of the receptive language skills of reading and listening must precede mastery of the expressive skills of writing and speaking and in which both receptive and expressive skills, both decoding and encoding of verbal clues, depend on the ability to reason clearly. Reading and listening intelligently, writing and speaking coherently and effectively -- all necessarily utilize the rational processes of analyzing, assimilating, and synthesizing logical argument and relationships. Furthermore, all of these skills require a context in which to operate, a content to be perceived or expressed reasonably. Though a communication skills program has as its primary objective the development of the student's ability to write and speak effectively, it must insure the student's ability to read. And as its ultimate test, it must make all of these skills effectual within the individual's own fields of interest, concentration, and employment.

The student should understand the interrelatedness of these skills to each other and to their practical applications. To facilitate this understanding, the sub-committee feels that basic courses in any communication skills program should be coordinated with one another and, inasmuch as possible, should employ a common vocabulary. The student should benefit from being apprized of the commonality of particular sub-skills to different areas of the communications skills spectrum.

The sub-committee, therefore, proposes now as a pilot project a new course Reading and Reasoning, as the necessary core of a coordinated three-course unit in communication skills which a student might offer in fulfillment of Division D requirements. The current URI curriculum offers strong basic courses in logic and in written and oral communications (for example, Philosophy 101, Scratch W, and Speech 101), but lacks a basic college-level reading course. The proposed communications skills unit would utilize the existing writing and speech courses but would enhance their effectiveness by adding this new course to provide instruction in reading and in those practical aspects of logic which are so necessary to the other skills. A recent extensive study of college students in the New York City system, as reported in the Chronicle of Higher Education for 18 October 1976, found that of students who had concurrent instruction in reading and writing eighty percent showed significant improvement in written communication skills while significant improvement was found in only forty-five percent of those students who had instruction in writing only.
While the Reading and Reasoning course could be offered independently, it is offered here as part of a coordinated unit. The sixty students who are enrolled in this course will be concurrently enrolled in one of four sections of SCRATCH W (Basic Composition). Those same students will be regrouped during the second semester into three sections of Speech 101. (See diagrams below).

**Pilot Design**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading and Reasoning</th>
<th>EDC/PHL 100X</th>
<th>60 students/sem.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SCRATCH 01</td>
<td>SCRATCH 02</td>
<td>SCRATCH 03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 stud.</td>
<td>15 stud.</td>
<td>15 stud.</td>
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**Semester I of 2 semester sequence**

**Personnel needed:**
- EDC/PHL 100 — Reading and Reasoning
  - Prof. M. McGuire (released time)*
  - Prof. J. Kowalski (supplied by Philosophy)
  - Teaching Assistant or Part-time Person (A)*

**Scratch**
- Section 01 Teaching Assistant (A) (From above)
- Section 02 Staff member B (supplied by SCRATCH)
- Section 03 Staff member C *
- Section 04 Staff member D *

**Speech 101**

**Semester II of 2 semester sequence 20/section**

**Personnel needed:**
- Speech
  - Section A Staff member A (supplied by Speech)
  - Section B Staff member B *
  - Section C Staff member C *

*Funding provided by Dean's Office

The proposed course in Reading and Reasoning will be cross-listed with Philosophy and Education, the two departments whose faculty designed the course. The SCRATCH faculty members and the Reading and Reasoning faculty members will work closely during the semester in which the students are concurrently enrolled. The person (teaching assistant, part-time special faculty member, regular SCRATCH faculty member) who would be working in EDC/PHL 100X and SCRATCH would provide a further link between two components of the program.
While the student is becoming more sensitive to detecting context clues, for example, he will also be receiving instruction in the production of those clues. While he is seeing implications, he will be learning to organize his own materials so that his readers can make inferences. This is an integrated approach in which the student is both reader and writer, an approach in which he is practicing decoding skills concomitantly with encoding skills.

PROPOSAL

1. Catalog Description:

EDC/PHL 100X  Reading and Reasoning  I
Introduction to the reading and reasoning skills necessary for the comprehension of written materials. Provides students with the intellectual skills for independent learning and general academic performance. (Lec. 3) Not open to students who have passed PHL 101.

2. Expected distribution:

Freshman: 100%

3. Place of course in curriculum:
The course is proposed as the core of a coordinated three-course unit in communication skills which a student might offer in fulfillment of Division D requirements.

4. Overlap:
Elements of the course here being proposed will overlap parts of one existing course and will also overlap parts of the course being proposed by the Analytical Thinking Skills Sub-committee of the Ad Hoc General Education Committee. The existing course - Logic: the Principles of Reasoning (PHL 101) - already covers many of the topics included in this course. However, the proposed course will provide a different focus from PHL 101 by emphasizing how these elements relate to reading comprehension and by providing extensive practice in using them to improve reading comprehension.
A difference in focus also provides much of the rationale for the overlap between this course and that being proposed by the Analytical Thinking Skills Sub-committee. Their course also discussed certain principles of logic and reasoning and will also contain a segment which treats critical reading. That both courses discuss reasoning is not surprising since the ability to reason is the foundation of all "intellectual skills." Furthermore, critical reading ability is clearly an important problem solving skill since so much information is obtained via the written word. Thus, critical reading is justifiably included as a topic in the Analytical Thinking Skills course. But critical reading and reasoning skills are also important in the development of communication skills. Through coordination with the writing sections, this course will emphasize the interplay of reading, reasoning, and writing skills rather than emphasize critical reading as an aspect of problem solving. It is hoped that far from being a duplication and waste of effort, the overlap between this course and the Analytical Thinking Skills course will tend to show that the skills of a "generally educated person" work in a coherent whole.

5. New facilities required:

None. However, the SCRATCH course requires seminar rooms, and the Education/Philosophy 100 faculty has requested Chafee 219 as a room which would allow them freedom for large group and small group instruction.

6. Availability of personnel:

The course will be team-taught by Prof. Marion McGuire (Education) and Prof. James Kowalski (Philosophy) assisted by one graduate teaching assistant.

7. Date when course will first be offered:

Fall, 1977

Communication Skills Sub-committee

Richard Bailey
Glenn Erickson
Allen Gunn, Chairman
James Kowalski
Marion McGuire
Beverly Swan
I. Course Outline

A. An Overview of Comprehension and Reasoning
B. Literal Comprehension of Written Language
   1. Getting what the author said
      a. selected fundamentals of syntax and semantics
      b. properties of words and sentences as signs
      c. word meanings: definitions, structural and context clues
   2. Organizational patterns and their signals
   3. Reading a textbook: the PAR-4 study technique
C. Interpretive Reading -- "Reading Between the Lines"
   1. Seeing implications
   2. Making inferences
D. Analytical Reading -- "Reading Beyond the Lines"
   1. Reasoning and argument in written language
   2. Noting clues to underlying assumptions, problems, themes, viewpoints, biases
   3. Seeing patterns in data for generating hypotheses, theories
   4. Determining relevance
E. Critical Reading -- Making Judgments
   1. Criteria for making judgments: internal and external
   2. Validity and reliability
      a. fallacies of argument
      b. propaganda techniques
F. Synthesis/ Putting It Together
   1. Note taking and reporting (oral and written)
   2. The individual project: a creative response

II. Course Materials:
   Many materials will be developed specifically for this course.