

SKIDMORE COLLEGE FACULTY MEETING

NOVEMBER 4, 2016

NEW GENERAL EDUCATION CURRICULUM PROPOSAL

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Dear Faculty Colleagues:

A substantial portion of the upcoming faculty meeting (November 4th) will be devoted to exploring the proposed new General Education curriculum. We want to thank FEC for granting us the time and space to discuss the proposal with you and we look forward to the conversation.

Attached is the latest iteration of the proposal, dated October 2016. It is slightly modified from the one we presented at the April faculty meeting. The modifications include several that emerged from that conversation, as well as others that followed.

In particular, we modified the language requirement. The earlier proposal asked each student to explore a new language to meet the requirement. Because of widely-expressed concerns, we abandoned that idea and now students can explore any language, even one they have previously studied. (So the language requirement is essentially the same as our current requirement; we have added different requirements only for some students studying English as a second language.)

We have revised the description of Global Cultural Inquiry in the hopes of allaying some of the anxieties about the shift of the "non-Western" requirement to this new one.

You will notice that our informal umbrella term, "Culture Centered Inquiry," has now expanded to encompass three courses: Language, The Bridge Experience, and Global Cultural Inquiry.

In anticipation of the upcoming faculty meeting discussion, we thought we'd address some of the misunderstandings that we've heard. Our hope is that this email will ease the minds of some faculty colleagues, at least in relation to the issues explored below.

INTEGRATIVE LEARNING

To begin, we think it is critical to remind faculty why we focused this proposed general education overhaul on the concept of integrative learning. Integrative learning, you'll recall, is defined as "learning across disciplinary boundaries, across time as [students] progress through their education, across the boundaries that traditionally separate the curriculum and the co-curriculum, and across the border between the campus and the world beyond" (Middle States Self-Study, i).

Integrative learning is a first principle — perhaps *the* first principle -- of liberal education. We expect our students to be liberally educated, and that means they are capable of making connections across traditional and non-traditional boundaries. We want them to take what they've learned in one class and apply it to other classes; we want them to take the leadership skills they learn on the athletic field and apply them to their academic group work; indeed, we want them to take what they've learned about the world and apply it to their study abroad experience and to their work lives.

Integrative learning — which for some sounds faddish and trendy — represents a recapturing of the core tenets of liberal education. We expect our students to be integrative learners; this general education proposal simply asks them to be more intentional, or more aware of it.

THE FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE

Some faculty have criticized the proposal because they believe it constrains choice in the FYE. *That is not the case.*

CEPP has said from the beginning that faculty will continue to imagine and design Scribner Seminars of their own choosing. There will be no pressure from the administration to create courses that will fit into categories of "Wicked Problems."

Faculty, in short, still have complete authority (and autonomy) to create and offer an interdisciplinary course with a fourth credit hour that is based on their particular intellectual interest or passion.

So then why, one might ask, change the descriptor/title of the FYE? There are two primary reasons. First, "Wicked Problems" is an important construct for the overall general education proposal. The goal of the proposed new curriculum is to make each student's liberal education choices more intentional. CEPP believes one way to do that is to draw attention to the fact that liberal education and integrative learning require students to wrestle with the big and small problems (past, present and/or future). Organizing courses in clusters around "Wicked Problems" is a way to do just that. It says to the first year student: You will be expected to think deeply (and perhaps act on those thoughts) about problems and solutions that are often intractable--or seem so--and that your education at Skidmore should equip you to do so.

One central reason CEPP organizes the FYE around "Wicked Problems" is to provide clusters of faculty and students with a common thematic focus. We believe something was lost when we retired the LSI program — namely that the faculty and students had a common experience, a common vocabulary. We do not believe we should return to the LSI model (which constrained the autonomy of the faculty to construct individual seminars), but we do believe that clusters of Scribner Seminars (even if just around a single topic) would be desirable. Clustering courses around "Wicked Problems" also enables students to talk with each other about the connections across courses.

CEPP has also heard from some faculty that the organization of the Scribner Seminars around "Wicked Problems" will be a nightmare. That, too, is not true. We're asking departments and programs to plan two years in advance so that we can take the courses being offered and loosely organize them around different "Wicked Problems."

In other words, the "Wicked Problems" will be identified *after* the faculty decide which seminars will be offered. And, again, no faculty members will be forced to join a "Wicked Problem" cluster if they don't want to.

THE BRIDGE EXPERIENCE

We've also heard from some faculty that their departments/programs will be "required" to participate in the Bridge Experience. *Not true.*

Unlike the FYE, The Bridge Experience is not a departmental responsibility. In short, while all departments are *invited* to offer Bridge Experience courses, they are not obliged to do so.

We've heard concern that students will look too narrowly to their major departments/programs to deliver the Bridge Experience. There is literally no evidence to suggest that. We always want students to look *outside* their majors for courses that will expand their understandings, and the evidence suggests that they have done so and will continue to do so. Integrative learning requires students to make often disparate connections. That is more likely to happen when they take a wide range of courses across many divisions.

DISTRIBUTION REQUIREMENTS

Some faculty have expressed concern over the loss of the distribution requirements, especially in the Humanities. It is true that the proposed new curriculum abandons the traditional distribution requirements, but the proposal still requires students to challenge themselves intellectually by exploring courses across the academic divisions of the College.

We still anticipate the typical Skidmore student will take courses in the Humanities and Social Sciences, for example. Enrollment data, as well as survey data from our students, reflects this reality. In addition, the fact that courses in the proposed curriculum can only fulfill one requirement (i.e., no double counting) will further facilitate students exploring a range of different courses.

IN THE MAJOR

Some faculty have expressed concern over the plan to rely on the majors to deliver various literacies. Here, we have used the "writing in the majors" initiative as our guide. That was a successful initiative because departments and programs had virtually unfettered control over how they delivered the requirement. The same is true for the literacies that will be embedded in the majors (should the proposal pass), which are expected to be in our curriculum by Middle States. Departments/Programs could determine that they want to cover these literacies in a series of courses, or in a single course, or in a course (or two) offered outside of the major. Departments/Programs could determine that they want to evaluate a student's comprehension of these various literacies through an assignment, a series of assignments, an integrative experience, etc. The decision is entirely up to the department/program. That said, we offer an aphorism we've heard more than once: Educating a student at a liberal arts college is "an individual exercise collectively experienced." In other words, we all teach our courses independently and individually, but a liberal education requires that the lessons we teach, the skills we impart, and the habits of mind we cultivate depend on collective goals.

RESOURCE ALLOCATION AND FACULTY WORKLOAD

Some faculty have raised concerns about resource allocation. CEPP believes that such a concern is unfounded. Any new curriculum is not an add-on to the existing one; it replaces it.

We are not adding another general education curriculum onto our existing one; rather, the allocation of resources for our existing general education curriculum — and there are many — will logically be reassigned to this new curriculum. The existing resources will more than cover the resources needed to offer the new curriculum. This is especially evident if you recall that the proposed new curriculum asks students, on average, to take *fewer* courses to satisfy their general education requirements.

Some faculty are worried that the new general education curriculum will also mean an increase in faculty workload. CEPP interprets this critique as including two

threads: 1) workload related to the *delivery* of the new curriculum and workload related to the *development* of the new curriculum. Neither worry is well-founded.

In terms of the delivery of the curriculum, CEPP reminds the faculty that they will continue to get full teaching credit for the courses and directed studies they offer. If they offer a Scribner Seminar or a Bridge Experience, faculty will get full teaching credit. If they want to tackle the "lab" component of the Bridge Experience, they will get credit for that too. Now that we have HELIOS in play, faculty will get credit for every Senior Coda experience as well.

The vast majority of Senior Codas will, of course, remain as traditional 2-, 3-, and 4-credit courses. But some may take the form of directed studies (independent studies, senior theses, collaborative research, etc.). In the past we did not have a mechanism to credit faculty with overseeing this work; with HELIOS, we now do. In terms of the development of a new curriculum, it is true that we don't yet have all the courses we need (especially in the Bridge Experience).

The Dean of the Faculty's office (partnering with the Center for Leadership, Teaching, and Learning) will offer course development stipends to faculty wanting to create the courses needed to deliver the curriculum.

In addition, we cannot fully implement the general education curriculum for four years after the faculty approves it because students are required to follow the general education curriculum listed in the catalog upon their entry to Skidmore. In other words, it will take four years before all students will fall under any new curriculum. That is more than enough time to develop the courses required.

SUMMARY

CEPP respectfully requests that our colleagues on the faculty approach this discussion with open minds. We know that this proposal cannot be "perfect." It

represents a series of compromises and it reflects the suggestions of a lot of people who had particular, and often conflicting, criticisms. But it also represents a vast improvement on what we have now.

We find the data compelling. It tells us that we are not yet educating our students as well as we could; they are not yet receiving the liberal education we promise. Our hope is that the faculty will embrace this proposal and we'll begin to make more intentional the integrative learning that is so essential a part of a strong liberal arts education.

Thank you for joining this important discussion.

Sincerely,

Committee on Educational Policies and Planning

April Bernard, Chair of CEPP (English Dept.)

Erica Bastress-Dukehart (History Dept.)

Marta Brunner (College Librarian)

Kelly Sheppard (Chemistry Dept.)

Janet Sorensen (Art Dept.)

Henry Jaffe (class of 2018, Student Government Assoc.)

Nicole Werner (class of 2018, Student Government Assoc.)

Beau Breslin (Dean of Faculty and VP for Academic Affairs)

Cerri Banks (Dean of Students and VP for Student Affairs)

GENERAL EDUCATION CURRICULUM FOR SKIDMORE COLLEGE

{REVISED MODEL: October, 2016}

After more than three years of research and planning, the Committee on Educational Policies and Planning offers this new General Education Curriculum. We have endeavored to be distinctive and innovative, and also to meet the "Goals for Student Learning and Development" voted in by the faculty in 2009. We have also addressed shortcomings in our current curriculum, as reflected in available assessment data, working in concert with the Middle States groups as they prepared the College's 2015 report.

All along, this process has involved scores of conversations with faculty, students, and staff; it has been done slowly and deliberately, with a full sense of faculty ownership. Over the course of spring 2015, and again in fall 2015, CEPP met with subgroups of faculty and administrative staff to hear concerns as they arose from earlier drafts. Feedback was also solicited at the 2016 Academic Summit and throughout the Spring 2016 semester. This is our latest revised proposal as of April 2016.

Please note that much of what is proposed is a new way of organizing what many of us already do. Nonetheless, by reframing and reorganizing, we hope to offer dramatic benefits for students, especially in their understanding of what the Liberal Arts can do; and, more specifically, how our curriculum at Skidmore offers a means of integrative and life-long learning.

Resources will be made available--including, but not limited to, support for faculty developing new courses, modeling interdisciplinary and integrative approaches, and the stakeholder working groups that will refine learning goals and criteria for individual courses.

Overview

The General Education Curriculum reflects the collective intellectual values of the Skidmore faculty. Both the ordering of the entire curriculum and the individual courses in the proposed new curriculum are designed to be logical and coherent. But it is important to remember that a General Education Curriculum (at Skidmore or elsewhere) is only one part of a student's academic and intellectual career. Together with the courses that constitute the major, the electives, the experiences outside of class, and so on, a set of general education requirements completes a liberal arts education. We can say that students are liberally educated only after they actively engage with all components of the educational journey.

In this new General Education Curriculum, we propose that no one department "owns" any one feature or requirement. We also envision that every faculty member will be able to imagine teaching at least one course somewhere in this General Education scheme, though participation in the general education curriculum is not a requirement for a successful career at the College. As you can see, we have modestly decreased the number of General Education requirements, in the interest of providing more flexibility for both faculty and students.

The proposed General Education Curriculum has four interrelated parts: 1) a set of Integrated Experiences, 2) a Foundational component, 3) an exploration of various Modes of Inquiry, and 4) a series of requirements that must be met in the major. The goal throughout is to provide depth and flexibility. For example, by embedding a set of requirements in the major, faculty in each discipline may determine for themselves how they want their majors to understand, comprehend, experience, and relate to specific conventions within the discipline. The Studio Art faculty will no doubt have very different ideas about visual literacy than, say the Mathematics Department faculty. There is no single college-wide formula that departments and programs have to adhere to. Similarly, the principles of depth and flexibility pervade the Integrated Experiences component of the proposed curriculum. Faculty will retain the ability to create their own courses – within the First Year Experience, the Bridge Experience, and the Senior Experience – and teach them the way they'd like. The difference now is that students will be required to think intentionally about the integration of knowledge at various points during their college careers. Ideally, the FYE will allow students to be intellectually nimble enough to make the curricular and co-curricular connections that are so central to becoming a liberally-educated person. That intellectual agility will carry through to the Bridge Experience and the Senior Coda, and, we hope, throughout the rest of their education and into their post-graduate lives.

Integrated Experiences

The FYE with Wicked Problems (1 course)

The Bridge Experience: Power and Justice (1 course)

Senior Experience: Coda (1 course)

Foundational

Applied Quantitative Reasoning (1 course)

Close Reading and Writing (1 course)

Language Study (1 course)

Modes of Inquiry

Artistic Inquiry through Practice (1 course)

Global Cultural Inquiry (1 course)

Scientific Inquiry through Practice (1 course)

In the major

Information Literacy

Oral Communication

Technology Literacy

Visual Literacy

Writing in the Major

Liberal arts requirements remain unchanged.

Maturity Requirement: Successful completion of at least 24 semester hours of 300-level credit taken at Skidmore College. Students may petition the Committee on Academic Standing for a small amount of 300-level credit taken at another college (for example, for study abroad).

Foundational, Modes of Inquiry, Bridge Experience, and Senior Coda courses can fulfill only one requirement in the general education curriculum but may also count towards requirements in a major and or minor, depending on the criteria of the major or minor. FYE cannot fulfill any other requirement at the College.

Integrated Experiences

"Integration"--that is, the student's making of meaningful and productive connections among the various courses, ideas, and experiences of a liberal arts education--accurately describes what we aim to foster in students at Skidmore College. To integrate knowledge is to think beyond the simplicity of a single idea to the broader and deeper concepts that animate the world. It involves the realization that to be liberally educated one must understand that concepts, principles, ideas, experiences, and values do not end at the arbitrary borders of a course or a discipline, but are interwoven in a tapestry of complex knowledge. We hope to challenge our students to be more intentional about this process and about the concepts that undergird it. As such, the principle of integration forms the backbone of the new proposed general education curriculum. Its core feature is a three-course sequence -- a First Year Experience (with "Wicked Problems"); a Bridge Experience (Power and Justice); and one of many Senior Experience Coda -- that, ideally, will empower our student to be serious, rigorous, and respected thinkers.

First Year Experience (with "Wicked Problems")

(1 course, 4 credits)

[Learning Goals and Criteria for course approval to be written by a working group of stakeholders.]

The goal of the FYE continues to be the same as it is now. It is a program that aims to give students an opportunity to explore a topic from an interdisciplinary perspective while also providing important tools to aid them in their transition from high school (the 4th credit hour). The current FYE asks faculty to develop courses that reflect their intellectual passions, and then provides the necessary support to help them achieve their highest pedagogical and mentoring goals. That will not change under the proposed curriculum. **Faculty will still get to develop their individual courses—no restrictions will be placed on what they can teach.**

What is different then? Under the proposed new FYE program, courses can organize or cluster around “wicked problems.” The concept of “wicked problems” has a long and impressive history in the academy and is defined as a social, cultural, environmental, ethical, moral, or other problem that exists within the world and that is incredibly difficult (if not impossible) to solve. [Rittel, Horst, and Webber, M. "Dilemmas in a General Theory of Planning." *Policy Sciences*, 1973: 155-169]. The idea is that the seminars will provide an interdisciplinary and integrative introduction to the liberal arts through study of a pressing world problem. Our own use of the term Wicked Problems is designed to help us introduce students to apparently intractable problems that can be addressed by different disciplines working together.

CEPP is attracted to the organizing concept of “wicked problems” for a number of reasons: 1) “Wicked Problems” are problems that require the most nimble and capable intellectual thinkers—liberally educated thinkers, in other words—and we see that our most important responsibility is to foster in our students those habits of mind that are capable of solving these problems. 2)

“Wicked Problems” are ubiquitous. There is almost no problem that we encounter--in the present day, or in history-- that does not in some way qualify as a “wicked problem.” That is useful because we do not want to sacrifice the central principle in the FYE that faculty should teach to their passion.¹ 3) Allowing faculty to join clusters around a particular “wicked problem” encourages the type of intellectual and personal connections that were lost when we abandoned the LSI program. For almost a decade now, faculty have lamented the fact that they do not have an opportunity to come together to learn from each other, much as they did when they were teaching in the former Liberal Studies I program. We are trying to recapture that faculty community spirit with the clusters that could emerge around various “wicked problems.”

How will it work? In much the same way as it works now. Virtually every FYE as currently taught already connects to at least one real-world dilemma; again, what is different here is the opportunity for faculty to recognize their areas of overlap and make pedagogical use of them as desired. **After the seminars for a given year are proposed, the participating faculty will identify relevant Wicked Problem groupings.** (Some faculty may not see any clear connection between their course and other seminars; they may teach solo, as they do now.) Faculty will as usual propose their FYE courses (a year earlier in advance to aid planning), and from these some groupings of Wicked Problems will be suggested by the faculty, so that faculty may work in groups of three, four or five on related problems. They may decide to share guest speaker events, classroom discussions, outings, as appropriate. Faculty will continue to have the opportunity to develop their own FYE seminars, and will **also** have the opportunity to develop courses together around a particular shared problem that will be addressed from different vantages. Refinement of these models--for example, a stand-alone seminar on a

¹ virtually every course at Skidmore touches upon what would qualify as one. The key is that the list of “wicked problems” will not be predetermined. Indeed, the idea is that faculty will propose seminars 16 months in advance of teaching them so that clusters can organically and naturally arise as desired by the faculty teaching those seminars.

single Wicked Problem, or clusters of seminars with deep or minimal levels of integration --will be explored further by the stakeholders working group.

Seminars within a group will have resources for shared classroom and co-curricular engagement. Students will work closely with faculty and peers, exploring contradictory opinions, practical tradeoffs, and uncertain data--meanwhile, learning to converse openly and respectfully. Seminars will invite first-year students to take intellectual risks and challenge themselves as they begin to integrate different modes of inquiry. The faculty will come from virtually every department, program, and discipline.

As this is a first-term-in-college course for students, the FYE will continue to provide a range of advising and mentoring experiences in the 4th credit hour. The course work itself will demand of incoming students a commitment to and responsibility for the world in which they live--outside the college, but also, by extension, within it.

CEPP COMMENT

LINKS (May require Skidmore credentials to access):

- [Mapping Goals for Student Learning and Development to Curricular and Co-Curricular Activities](#)
- [2015 Alumni Learning Census, Classes 2001-2010](#)
- [2014 Assessment Report on how well our students are meeting the GSLD](#)
- [Skidmore's Middle States Self Study Report](#)
- [Goals for Student Learning and Development \(GSLD\)](#)

Bridge Experience: Power and Justice

(1 course; 3-credit or more seminar plus 1-credit lab)

[Learning Goals and Criteria for course approval to come; to be written by committee of stakeholders.]

Students will take a course, **one of many to be offered**, that interrogates the nature of power and justice--with a focus that may be historical, sociological, literary, anthropological, political, psychological, comparative, contemporary, philosophical, or all or some of these. (Ideally, this course will be taken in the 2nd or 3rd year.) The course may focus on power and justice through the lens of identity, social and cultural diversity, gender, race, or religion, or class (or some combination of these) and may well also look at artistic expression and organized political action. In addition to the analytical work done in the classroom setting, each seminar will also have a 1-credit "lab" practicum--not necessarily taught or overseen by the same instructor--that draws on Skidmore's mind-and-hand heritage by giving students hands-on experience.

The impetus for the Bridge Experience proposal comes from assessment data that shows significant gaps in Skidmore students' ability to meet our Goals for Student Learning and Development in the areas of:

- 1) Knowledge about social and cultural diversity,
- 2) Intellectual skills and practice in interacting effectively and collaboratively with individuals and across social identities,
- 3) Ability to interrogate one's own values in relation to those of others, across social and cultural differences, and to develop practical competencies for managing a personal, professional, and community life; and
- 4) The capacity for self-transformation through the development of intellectual integrity, humility, and courage.

Our assessment data show that our current curriculum is failing to reach students in these critical areas. Although the Bridge Experience will certainly not be the only part of the curriculum that addresses the above goals, this curricular element is specifically designed to prepare students for full and effective participation in 21st century society.

All Bridge Experience courses will include a one-credit “laboratory” component, where students are provided with an opportunity to experiment, observe, and investigate principles, ideas, and concepts related to justice and power. Insofar as the labs in our physical and life science courses take the teachings that may come from books or discussions to another realm – an experimental and practical realm – labs in social science, humanities, arts, and pre-professional courses can (and do) provide the conditions to experiment and apply knowledge. That is what we are aiming for here. Again, **the idea is for faculty to retain maximum flexibility for innovation.**

It is also possible that a course’s lab component might be taught by another member of the faculty, should the primary instructor of the Bridge Experience course decide to pursue that approach. Faculty who are most comfortable with teaching subjects in a seminar or lecture setting could co-teach with other faculty who are passionate about helping students practice their skills, much like science lab skills are taught differently (and sometimes by different people) than lecture/seminar materials.

Many of our current students lack these critical skills for 21st century citizenship and creative living in the liberal arts tradition. With Bridge courses, students who engage multiple times during a semester with these skills and issues to demonstrate skill building could result in a deeper impact on student development than our current approach. As part of the curriculum’s Integrative course series, Bridge courses would include course components involving self-assessment and/or deeper reflection. These faculty-guided meta-learning spaces should specifically encourage students to develop their own meaningful connections, including towards meeting the Goals for Student Learning and Development.

CEPP COMMENT

A number of classes already on the books, plus a host of new possibilities, may fulfill this Bridge Experience requirement. Eligible courses will primarily come from the Humanities and Social Sciences (as well, perhaps, as theater, business, education, etc.). Appropriate course caps for the lab practicums will need to be considered.

Resources available to help develop Bridge Experience Labs:

Center for Leadership, Teaching, and Learning

Civic Engagement including Project Pericles

Conflict Resolution

GIS Center for Interdisciplinary Research

Honors Forum

Intergroup Relations

John B. Moore Documentary Studies Collaborative (MDOCS)

Off-Campus Study & Exchanges

Office of Community Service Programs

Office of the Dean of the Faculty

Project on Restorative Justice

Scribner Library

Sustainability Office

Tang Teaching Museum & Art Gallery

LINKS (May require Skidmore credentials to access):

- **Mapping Goals for Student Learning and Development to Curricular and Co-Curricular Activities**
- **2015 Alumni Learning Census, Classes 2001-2010**
- **2014 Assessment Report on how well our students are meeting the GSLD**
- **2014 student campaign: I, Too, Am Skidmore**
- **2013 NSSE assessment data**
- **2012 Culture Centered Inquiry (CCI) Proposal (CEPP)**
- **2012 Alumni Learning Census, Classes 2003 and 2008**
- **2012 CIGU Report: Graduating Students of Color Exit Interviews Class of 2011**
- **2009 Survey and Analysis of Cultural Diversity Courses at Skidmore College**
- **Skidmore's Middle States Self Study Report**

Senior Experience: Coda

(2, 3, or 4 credits)

[Learning Goals and Criteria for course approval to come; to be written by committee of stakeholders.]

The goal of the Senior Coda is to further integrate many aspects of a broad liberal arts education and to give students the opportunity to imagine themselves--productively, creatively, passionately, and responsibly--as citizens in the world they are facing beyond graduation. The term coda comes from dance, music, and theater, where it describes the final section of a piece that serves to summarize the preceding passages but also introduces a final, novel idea. Coda captures the intended spirit of the Senior Experience, which should strive to integrate the student's previous experiences at Skidmore while at the same time fostering the production of new and creative ideas. The Coda is a moment to simultaneously reflect on one's academic past and to look to the future.

Students in their senior year will complete **one of many possible** Codas. There is no specific course that students must take, but they must find or design an opportunity to take ownership of their own educational experience and pursue additional steps to integrate their many experiences at Skidmore. As with all courses, faculty are free to design Codas as they see fit. The student's experience with the Coda should be informed by the following themes:

1. Relevance-- the Coda enables the student to connect to the broader world, which may mean the broader world of academic discourse and/or the world outside of Skidmore College.
2. Integration--the Coda provides a setting for consciously and reflectively examining a student's broad and unique liberal arts education.
3. Creativity--the Coda emphasizes the centrality of producing original work and engaging with individual ideas -- in analysis or in invention-- in all fields.

It is expected that by the Senior Year, students have a firm idea of their academic interests and some idea of their post-college plans, and in a Coda students may work collaboratively with faculty and peers to identify an appropriate integrative course, research project, and/or practicum. Students may choose to fulfill their Coda within their major, but they are free to find interdisciplinary experiences and Codas offered by other departments. There are many ways to define such courses, including but not limited to:

- Senior thesis projects or capstone courses that require significant research and writing.
- Existing maturity-level courses that require substantial engagement with original research, service learning, and/or civic engagement with a focus on integrative learning.
- Practicum experiences within a major (e.g., an Education major may satisfy this requirement with the teaching semester).
- A one-credit add-on to an existing 3 or 4 credit course that requires the student to focus on integrative learning, work in collaborative setting with peers and faculty, and present a final product that satisfies the three Coda themes.
- A 2, 3 or 4 credit Coda course organized by a faculty member that is specifically designed to invite students who do not choose to take on individual research or practicum experiences to engage with the three themes of the Coda.

As part of the Coda, students will have the opportunity to reflect on how their project and liberal arts education connect to society. Working collaboratively with faculty and peers, identifying one's own particular areas of expertise, and finding moments for reflection on the integrative learning experience are essential elements of the senior experience. The Coda is the conclusion of the sequence of integrative experiences, and as such seniors are expected to be able to engage intentionally and thoughtfully with the process of reflecting on their time at Skidmore.

At the conclusion of the Coda, each student will write a brief reflection paper (approximately 800-1000 words), to be made available to the Skidmore

community online. A study-body vote will determine the top ten Coda Reflection Essays; a faculty member will be designated by the Dean of the Faculty's office to select from those ten the winning essay, which will be printed and made available at the commencement ceremony.

This paper must demonstrate that students have: completed the requirements of the Coda; engaged with their academic work in an integrative and creative manner; and drawn relevant connections to academic discourse, to society, and between various academic experiences throughout their time in college. This paper will serve as a final moment of reflection for the student. In addition to the benefit to the student, the publication of the Coda papers will serve as a moment of celebration of the liberal arts for the College community.

CEPP COMMENT

LINKS (May require Skidmore credentials to access):

- [Mapping Goals for Student Learning and Development to Curricular and Co-Curricular Activities](#)
- [2015 Alumni Learning Census, Classes 2001-2010](#)
- [2014 Assessment Report on how well our students are meeting the GSLD](#)
- [Skidmore's Middle States Self Study Report](#)
- [Goals for Student Learning and Development \(GSLD\)](#)

Foundational

Applied Quantitative Reasoning

(1 course, 3 credits or more)

To be completed by the end of the sophomore year; prerequisite: placement or Fundamental Quantitative Reasoning course

[Learning Goals and Criteria for course approval has already been written by a committee of stakeholders]

Students must complete one Applied Quantitative Reasoning (AQR) course. Although the specific context may vary, AQR courses include the study and use of quantitative methods as a primary organizing principle of the course. In an AQR course, students will develop and use quantitative skills in an applied setting to consider, model, and solve discipline-specific or interdisciplinary real-world problems and interpret and communicate their results. The course will have Fundamental Quantitative Reasoning (FQR) as a prerequisite. Upon completing the AQR requirement successfully, students will be able to do each of the following:

1. use statistical and/or mathematical models to characterize empirical data
2. understand, model, and predict the behavior of populations or systems
3. interpret and communicate results orally and/or in writing
4. use quantitative reasoning for informed decision-making

AQR Course Approval:

For a course to be designated AQR, the course will need to be certified by the Quantitative Reasoning Program Director in conjunction with a QR review team of 2 STEM faculty, appointed annually by the QR director in consultation with the Curriculum Committee and the Dean of the Faculty. To certify a course as AQR, the review team will consider the course syllabus as well as a brief outline of the specific ways in which the course addresses the learning goals outlined above. Learning goals related to QR are expected to be explicitly identified in the course

syllabus. Once a course is certified as an AQR course, the QR review team will review the course every 3 years.

Pre-requisite for AQR

To enroll in an AQR course, students will need to have mastered fundamental quantitative reasoning content. This mastery ensures that students have the necessary mathematical and quantitative reasoning skills to be successful in an AQR course and are prepared for other courses that use quantitative methods as part of the curriculum.

Fundamental skills ensure that students will:

1. Be able to perform mathematical calculations involving estimation, basic formulas, units, percentages, fractions, statistics, probability, and geometry
2. Be able to formulate and apply basic algebra skills
3. Understand, interpret, and apply mathematical concepts and calculations in his/her daily life
4. Effectively communicate and discuss mathematical concepts and results both orally and in writing
5. Appreciate the power and utility of mathematics and quantitative reasoning.

Students can demonstrate foundational skills through SAT/ACT mathematical test scores as before. New and transfer students not fulfilling this pre-requisite automatically through test scores will be required to complete an online QR placement test prior to registering for Skidmore courses. The test results will place students into one of the following three courses: AQR-level, foundational-level, or basic skills. In summary, students can fulfill the foundational QR content in one of the following ways:

1. Achieving a score of at least 630 on the MSAT I examination or a score of at least 570 on any Mathematics SAT II examination or a score of at least 28 on the Mathematics ACT examination
2. Placing into AQR-level coursework through the QR placement test
3. Successfully completing a Fundamental Quantitative Reasoning (FQR) course

In addition, the possible outcomes of the placement test include:

1. Placement into AQR-level courses
2. Placement into FQR-level courses
3. Placement into a basic mathematical skills course (MA 100)

FQR Courses:

Fundamental QR courses are 100-level courses offered in a variety of departments and programs that are worth 3 or more credit hours and should ensure that students master the foundational skills outlined above. Courses will need to be certified and if necessary developed to target foundational skill content. Once a student completes a FQR course, he/she is prepared to take an AQR level course.

FQR Courses Approval:

For an existing course to be designated FQR, the course will need to be certified by the Quantitative Reasoning Program Director in conjunction with a QR review team of two STEM faculty, appointed annually by the QR director in consultation with the Curriculum Committee and the Dean of the Faculty. New courses will need to first have CC approval prior to seeking FQR approval. To certify a course as FQR, the review team will consider the course syllabus as well as the FQR approval document which outlines the specific ways in which the course addresses the learning goals stated above. Once a course is certified as a FQR course, the course will be reviewed by the QR review team within 5 years of approval or at the discretion of the QR Director.

MA 100: Quantitative Skills is a 3-hour course that currently exists and is the study of practical arithmetic and geometry, data gathering and analysis, introductory probability and statistics, size and bias in sampling, hypothesis testing, confidence intervals and their use in statistical analysis, linear relationships, interpolation and extrapolation, correlation, linear and exponential growth with practical applications.

Students requiring a basic skills course must complete this course prior to enrolling in a FQR-level course which must be completed prior to enrolling in an AQR course.

CEPP COMMENT

LINKS (May require Skidmore credentials to access):

- [Mapping Goals for Student Learning and Development to Curricular and Co-Curricular Activities](#)
- [2015 Alumni Learning Census, Classes 2001-2010](#)
- [2014 Assessment Report on how well our students are meeting the GSLD](#)
- [2014 Assessment White Paper on the Quantitative Reasoning Requirements](#)
- [2014 Assessment Report on Scientific Literacy and Quantitative Reasoning](#)
- [2013 NSSE assessment data](#)
- [2012 CEPP Subcommittee Report on Scientific Literacy](#)
- [Skidmore's Middle States Self Study Report](#)
- [Goals for Student Learning and Development \(GSLD\)](#)

Close Reading and Writing

(1 course, 4-credit, writing intensive course)

To be completed by end of 2nd year; prerequisite: placement or successful completion of EN 103.

[Learning Goals and Criteria for course approval to come; to be written by committee of stakeholders]

A course that will immerse students in the process of writing informed by careful reasoning and critical reading of texts, broadly defined. Students will further cultivate their skills in analyzing and writing from sources, developing ideas, organizing material, and revising drafts. Students will further refine their understanding of grammar, style, and formal conventions of writing. Some students will need prerequisite experience writing in English (*e.g.*, EN 100 and EN 103) before enrolling in a Close Reading and Writing course.

CEPP COMMENT

This is a refinement of the current Expository Writing requirement. A number of courses currently taught under the EN 105 rubric and appropriately designed 100-level Writing Intensive (WI) courses would count (*e.g.*, AM 103W). As writing intensive courses, they will have the appropriate lower course caps. The prerequisite must be completed by the end of the first year.

LINKS (May require Skidmore credentials to access):

- [Mapping Goals for Student Learning and Development to Curricular and Co-Curricular Activities](#)
- [2012 Writing in the Majors Report: Teagle-Funded Writing Initiative](#)
- [Goals for Student Learning and Development \(GSLD\)](#)
- [Writing Intensive Courses](#)

Language Study

(1 course, 3 credits or more)

[Learning Goals and Criteria for course approval to come; to be written by committee of stakeholders]

Study of an additional language provides insight into cultural differences, fosters a global perspective, develops understanding of the workings of language systems, and provides an alternate means of perceiving the world. Accordingly, all students must take one course in an additional language. The requirement can be fulfilled one of two ways.

- 1) Successful completion of a course focused on acquisition and or analysis of a language other than English.
- 2) Successful completion of EN 103 by a student who takes the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) for admission to the College.

CEPP COMMENT

The language courses offered by the World Languages and Literatures Department as well as the Classics Department would fulfill the requirement.

LINKS (May require Skidmore credentials to access):

- [Mapping Goals for Student Learning and Development to Curricular and Co-Curricular Activities](#)
- [2012 Culture Centered Inquiry \(CCI\) Proposal \(CEPP\)](#)
- [Goals for Student Learning and Development \(GSLD\)](#)

Modes of Inquiry

Artistic Inquiry through Practice

(2, 3, or 4 credits)

[Learning Goals and Criteria for course approval to come; to be written by committee of stakeholders.]

A course in which students develop an understanding of creative expression through the practice of a performing, plastic, visual, digital, or literary art. Through the critique and analysis of artworks, students develop a context for and an understanding of their own creative output as well as the creations of others. The fundamental student learning goals include the advancement of technical proficiency and the refinement of critical aesthetic sensibility. Students directly experience the thought processes and actions involved in the creation of artistic forms and should learn how to analyze, interpret and criticize such forms.

CEPP COMMENT

Any number of courses in Art, Dance, Creative Writing in English, Music, and Theater will be eligible.

LINKS (May require Skidmore credentials to access):

- [Mapping Goals for Student Learning and Development to Curricular and Co-Curricular Activities](#)
- [2012 Alumni Learning Census, Classes 2003 and 2008](#)
- [Goals for Student Learning and Development \(GSLD\)](#)

Global Cultural Inquiry

(1 course, 3 credits or more)

[Learning Goals and Criteria for course approval to come; to be written by committee of stakeholders]

Courses that qualify as Global Cultural Inquiry are those in which students develop intercultural understanding and global perspectives, by turning their attention away from western, eurocentric cultural traditions to study such topics as the global south, first nations/indigenous peoples, colonialism/formerly colonized nations, and mass migration, including comparative approaches to these topics. In these courses students may also examine the social, economic, political, historical, literary, philosophical, religious, and/or aesthetic aspects of different cultures and their global contexts.

CEPP COMMENT

Course from a number of disciplines in the Humanities and Social Sciences would count. Many cultural classes in World Languages and Literatures and Classics would count. As with other requirements, students may take their Global Cultural Inquiry course while studying abroad.

LINKS (May require Skidmore credentials to access):

- [Goals for Student Learning and Development \(GSLD\)](#)
- [Mapping Goals for Student Learning and Development to Curricular and Co-Curricular Activities](#)
- [2009 Survey and Analysis of Cultural Diversity Courses at Skidmore College](#)
- [2012 Culture Centered Inquiry \(CCI\) Proposal \(CEPP\)](#)

Scientific Inquiry through Practice

(1 course, 4-credits)

[Based on the recommendation of the 2011-2012 CEPP sub-committee on Science Literacy. A committee of stakeholders will further refine the Learning Goals and Criteria for approving courses.]

To learn about the nature of science, students in a Scientific Inquiry course will engage in a practice of science to study an aspect of the world. At least one credit of the course will be devoted to hands-on student engagement in scientific practices in a laboratory or fieldwork component of the course where students learn to make their own measurements and or observations, evaluate the quality of the data and observations, and draw appropriate conclusions based on the available evidence. Students in the course will consider the process of scientific thinking as a set of inquiry-based methodologies used to understand the world and the design of scientific studies including inductive and deductive approaches. Students will learn about scientific theories and knowledge regarding an aspect of the world based on scientific practices. In addition, the laboratory or fieldwork component will substantially engage students in at least one of the following ways so students learn about scientific practices in a hands-on manner:

- a. Inquiry based activities where students use an inductive and or deductive approach to study and better understand an aspect of the world where the outcome of the study is not known beforehand.
- b. Discovery based activities where students use an inductive and or deductive approach to learn about known phenomena in the universe.
- c. Problem-based activities where students develop their own methodology to address a particular scientific question and or problem.

CEPP COMMENT

LINKS (May require Skidmore credentials to access):

- [Mapping Goals for Student Learning and Development to Curricular and Co-Curricular Activities](#)
- [2015 Alumni Learning Census, Classes 2001-2010](#)
- [2014 Assessment Report on how well our students are meeting the GSLD](#)
- [2014 Assessment Report on Scientific Literacy and Quantitative Reasoning](#)
- [2012 CEPP Subcommittee Report on Scientific Literacy](#)
- [Goals for Student Learning and Development \(GSLD\)](#)

Requirements Met in the Major

Writing in the Major

No significant changes proposed to the requirement at this time.

Information Literacy

(from the Association of College and Research Libraries, Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education Feb. 2015)

Information literacy is the set of integrated abilities encompassing the reflective discovery of information, the understanding of how information is produced and valued, and the use of information in creating new knowledge and participating ethically in communities of learning.

An information literate individual is able to (ACRL Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education Jan. 2000):

- Determine the extent of information needed
- Access the needed information effectively and efficiently
- Evaluate information and its sources critically
- Incorporate selected information into one's knowledge base
- Use information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose
- Understand the economic, legal, and social issues surrounding the use of information, and access and use information ethically and legally

Implementation committee will consider ways in which discipline-based information skills can be intentionally included in the major, either through application of the "Writing in the Major" model or by some other mechanism.

Technology Literacy

A technology literate student is able to use effectively appropriate tools to acquire, manage, evaluate, create, and or communicate information, knowledge, or works of art.

Implementation committee will consider ways in which discipline-based technology skills can be intentionally included in the major, either through application of the "Writing in the Major" model or by some other mechanism.

Visual Literacy

(Adapted from the Association of College and Research Libraries, Visual Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education Oct. 2011)

A visually literate individual is able to:

- Determine the nature and extent of the visual materials needed
- Find and access needed images, objects, and visual media effectively and efficiently

- Interpret and analyze the meanings of images and visual media
- Evaluate images, objects, and their sources
- Use images, objects, and or visual media effectively
- Design and create meaningful images, objects, and or visual media
- Understand many of the ethical, legal, social, and economic issues surrounding the creation and use of images, objects, and visual media; and access and use visual materials ethically

Implementation committee will consider ways in which discipline-based visual literacy can be intentionally included in the major, either through application of the “Writing in the Major” model or by some other mechanism.

Oral Communication

(from AAC&U *Oral Communication VALUE Rubric*) Oral communication is a prepared, purposeful presentation designed to increase knowledge, to foster understanding, or to promote change in the listeners' attitudes, values, beliefs, or behaviors.

Implementation committee will consider ways in which discipline-based oral communication can be intentionally included in the major, either through application of the “Writing in the Major” model or by some other mechanism.

CEPP COMMENT

In a number of disciplines many of these skills sets will overlap. Departments and programs are encouraged to think how they can be integrated together and into the curriculum.

Links (May require Skidmore credentials to access):

- [Goals for Student Learning and Development \(GSLD\)](#)
- [Mapping Goals for Student Learning and Development to Curricular and Co-Curricular Activities](#)
- [2015 Alumni Learning Census, Classes 2001-2010](#)
- [2014 Assessment Report on how well our students are meeting the GSLD](#)
- [2013 NSSE assessment data](#)
- [2012 Writing in the Majors Report: Teagle-Funded Writing Initiative](#)
- [Middle States 2015-16 Accreditation Resources: Self Study Design, Standards of Excellence](#)
- [Skidmore's Middle States Self Study Report](#)

Supporting Resources

May require Skidmore credentials for access.

What are our Goals for Student Learning?

- **Goals for Student Learning and Development (GSLD)**

Where are these Goals addressed in the existing Curriculum?

- **Mapping Goals for Student Learning and Development to Curricular and Co-Curricular Activities**

What evidence do we have about gaps in current student outcomes? What data support the changes CEPP recommends?

Assessment and Institutional Research Data

The resources below are most apt, in reverse chronological order:

- **2015 Alumni Learning Census, Classes 2001-2010**
- **2014 Assessment Report on how well our students are meeting the GSLD**
- **2014 student campaign: I, Too, Am Skidmore**
- **2014 Assessment White Paper on the Quantitative Reasoning Requirements**
- **2014 Assessment Report on Scientific Literacy and Quantitative Reasoning**
- **2013 Assessment Report on Civic Engagement**
- **2013 NSSE assessment data**
- **2012 Culture Centered Inquiry (CCI) Proposal (CEPP)**
- **2012 Writing in the Majors Report: Teagle-Funded Writing Initiative**
- **2012 Alumni Learning Census, Classes 2003 and 2008**
- **2012 CEPP Subcommittee Report on Scientific Literacy**
- **2012 CIGU Report: Graduating Students of Color Exit Interviews Class of 2011**
- **2011 Report on Engaging Sophomore Students with Liberal Learning: Focused Exploration through Academic Advising**
- **2009 Survey and Analysis of Cultural Diversity Courses at Skidmore College**

What does our Accrediting Commission (Middle States Commission on Higher Education) say about Curricula?

- **Middle States 2015-16 Accreditation Resources: Self Study Design, Standards of Excellence**

What does our ongoing Self-Study say about our curriculum?

- **Skidmore's Middle States Self Study Report**

What are the requirements of our existing Curriculum?

- **Checklist of All-College Degree Requirements**
- **All-College Curriculum With Links to Guidelines**

General Education Curriculum Proposal

Committee on Educational
Policies and Planning (CEPP)

Current All College Curriculum

First Year Experience

Foundational:
Expository Writing
Quantitative Reasoning
1 & 2

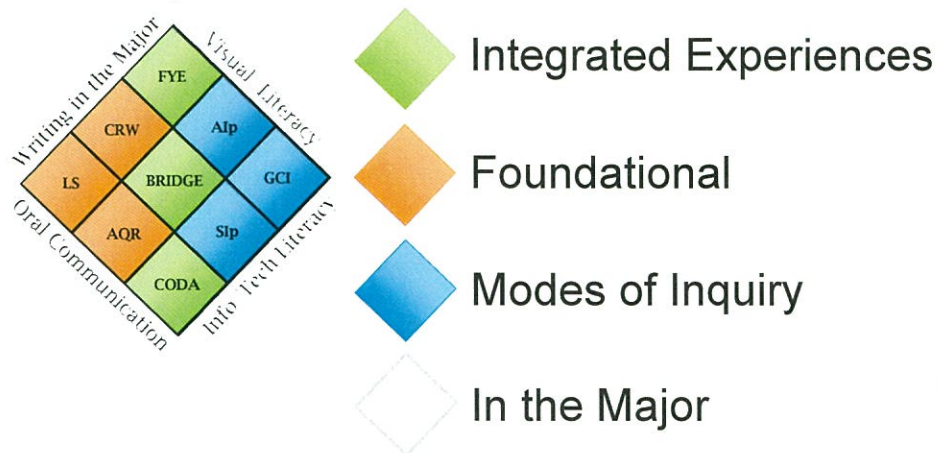
Cultural Centered Inquiry:
Foreign Language
Non-Western/Cultural
Diversity

Breadth:
Arts
Humanities
Natural Sciences
Social Sciences

Writing in the Major

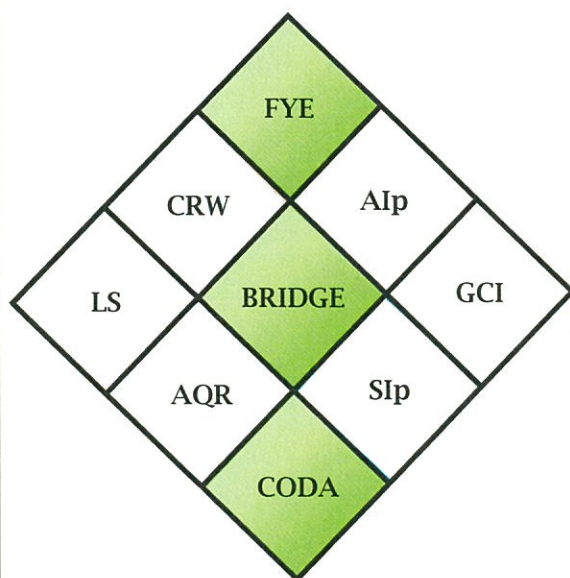
Most Majors: Senior
Capstone, Thesis, Seminar,
or Workshop

A Framework for Student Learning & Development



No double counting except for major/minor requirements (FYE an exception)

Integrative Experiences

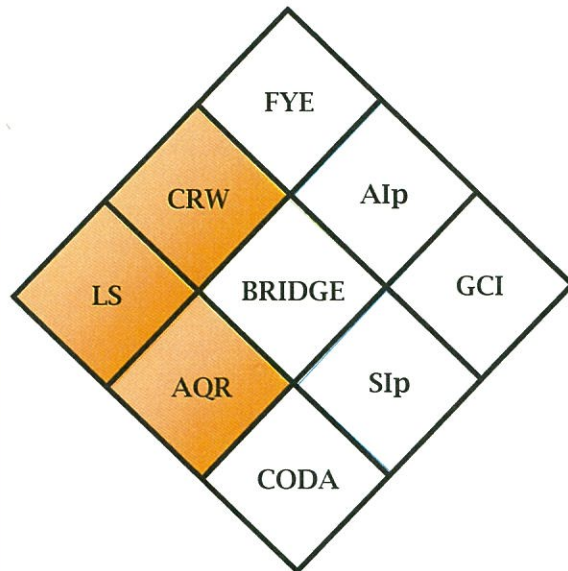


FYE
First Year
Experience
w/ Wicked Problems

BRIDGE
Bridge Experience
Power & Justice

CODA
Senior Experience:
Coda

Foundational

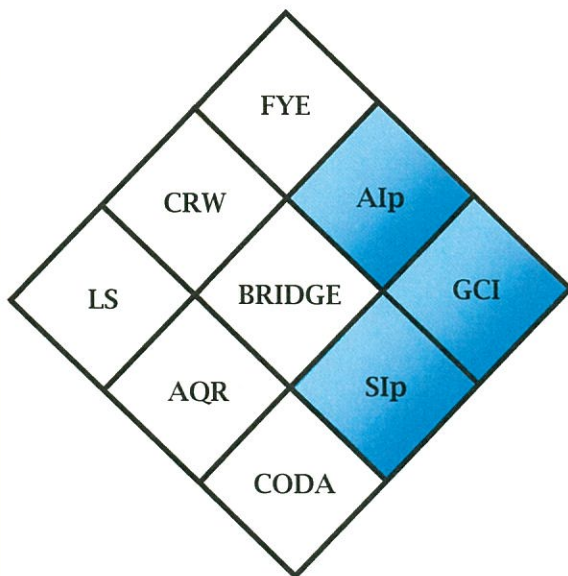


CRW
Close Reading
and Writing

LS
Language
Study

AQR
Applied
Quantitative
Reasoning

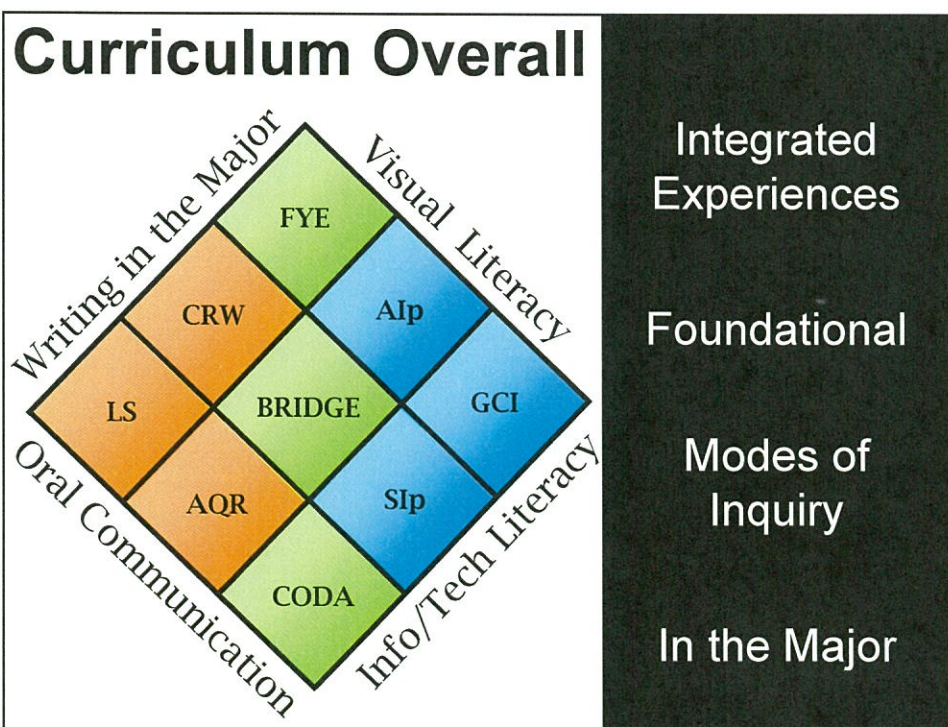
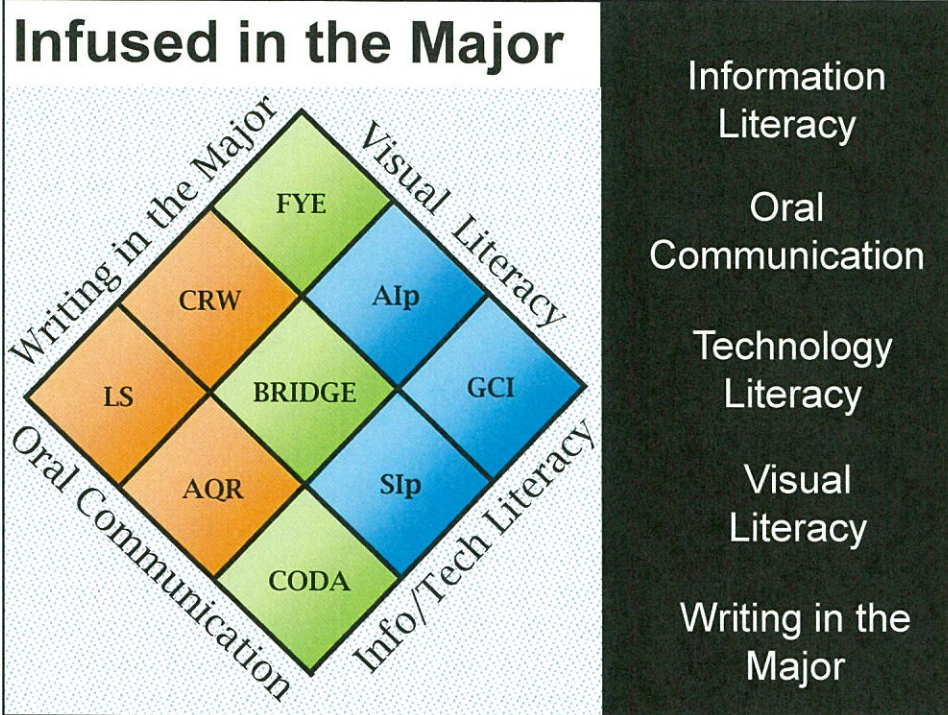
Modes of Inquiry

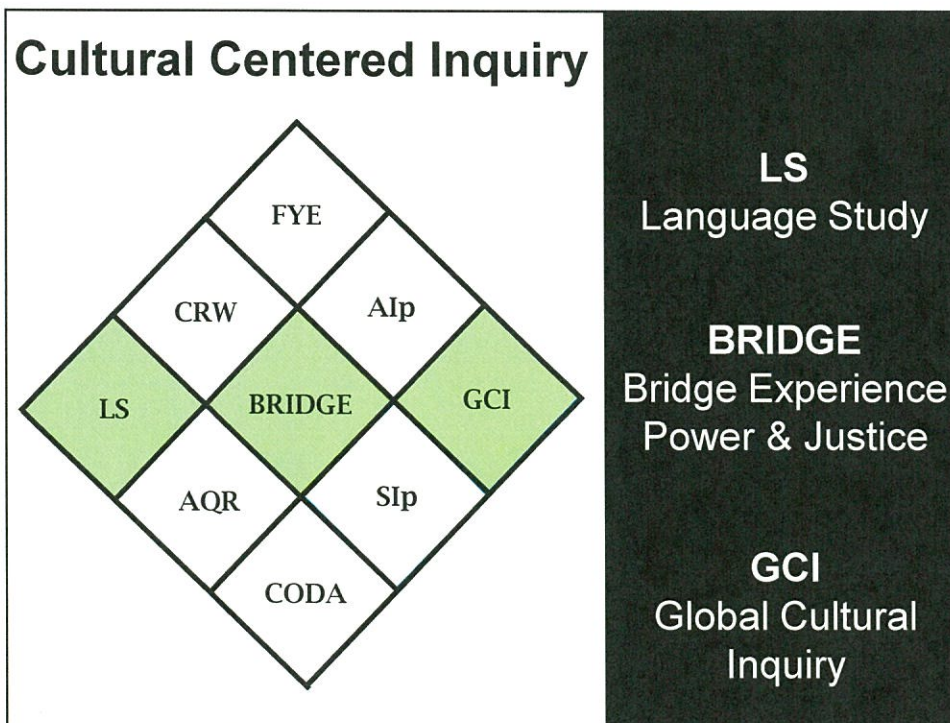
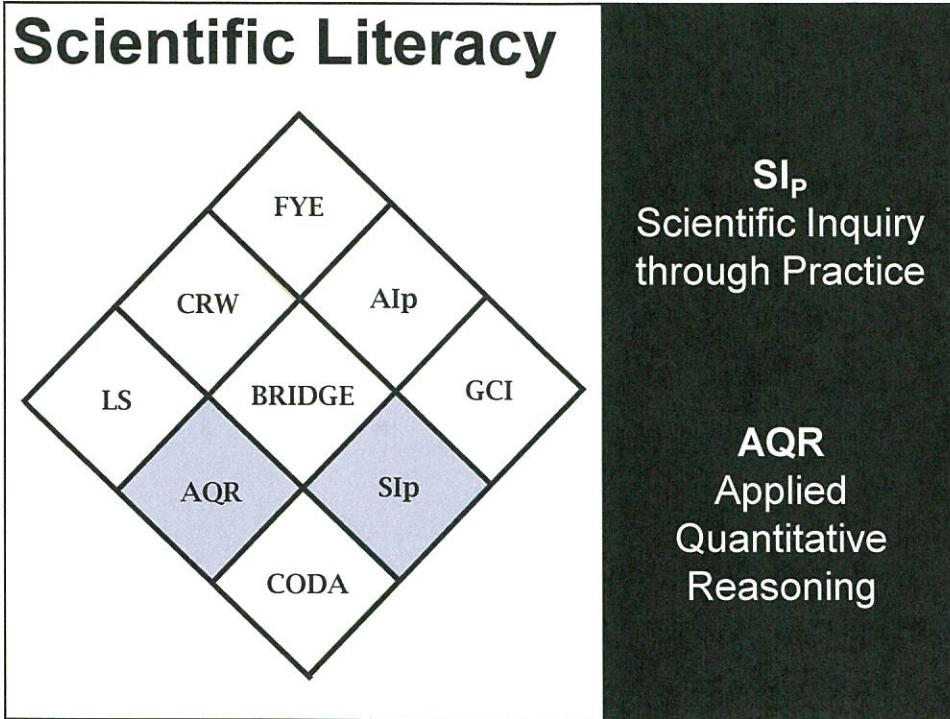


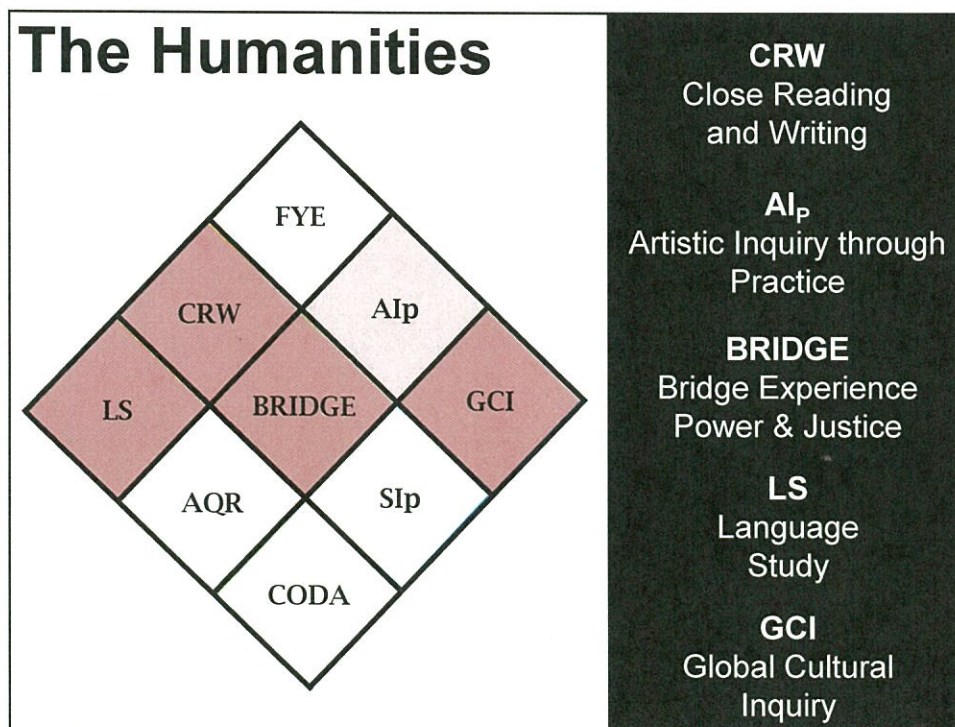
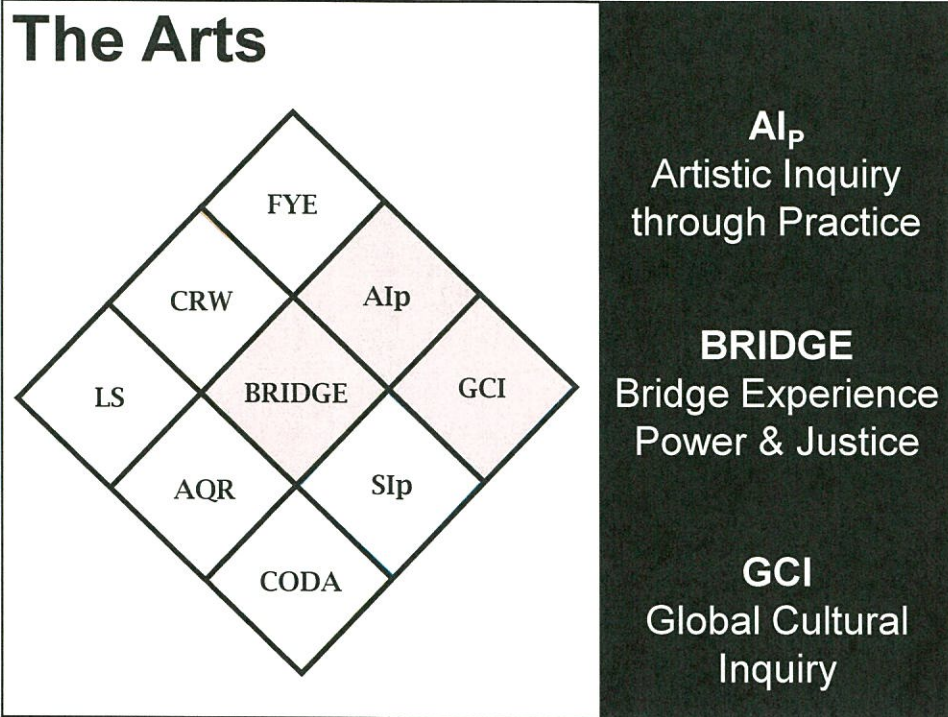
AIp
Artistic Inquiry
through Practice

GCI
Global Cultural
Inquiry

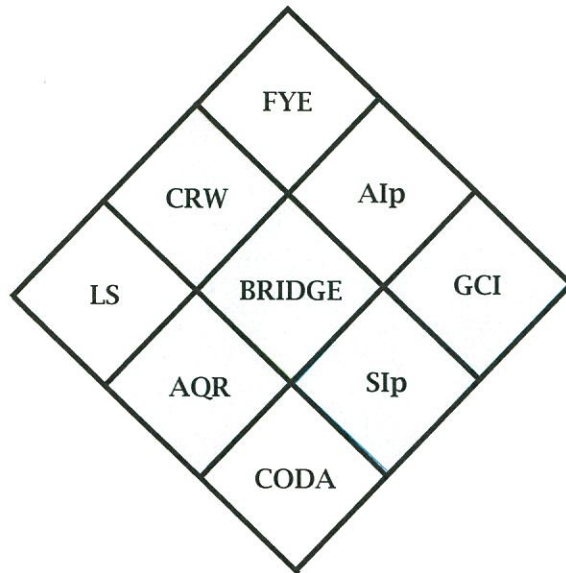
SIp
Scientific Inquiry
through Practice







The Social Sciences



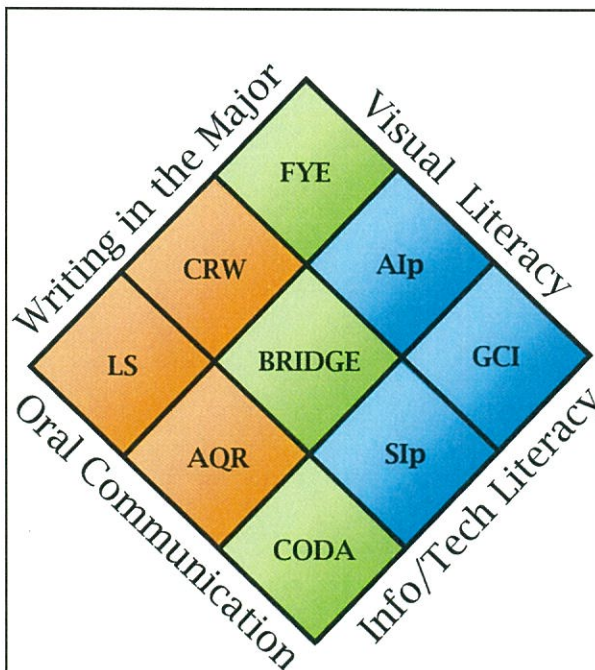
GCI
Global Cultural
Inquiry

CRW
Close Reading
and Writing

BRIDGE
Bridge Experience
Power & Justice

SI_p
Scientific Inquiry
through Practice

AQR
Applied Quantitative
Reasoning



Integrated
Experiences

Foundational

Modes of
Inquiry

In the Major



GENERAL EDUCATION CURRICULUM REFORM TIMELINE

The general education curriculum proposal is the product of careful thinking and conversations over four years by a lot of dedicated people. Here's an overview of [how we got here](#).

10 people

