

An Undergraduate Educational Studies Program

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This is an outline of an undergraduate bachelor's degree program with a major concentration in educational studies I put together—it is not in place anywhere. This configuration is offered for consideration by university faculty and administrators engaged in program creation in this area. This program is not professional training nor is it designed to lead to licensure; rather, it is academic study, a scholarly exploration of the field of education that parallels those in other fields, say, sociology or mathematics or literature. My assumption is that this would be a program offered by a college of education and that it would lead to a B.S. degree granted by that college.

If you have questions or comments after reading over what is here, if you think I might be able to help in some way, you can contact me at the e-mail address on this site.

Included here, three sections:

I. The philosophical underpinning of the major concentration in educational studies: the thinking of Robert Henri on education. At the heart of proposal is the idea of honoring the academic freedom and personal integrity of the individual student. I sought to design a program that respects and supports intellectual and philosophical diversity and self-determination. The expectation is that the men and women who are students in this program will engage their work with rigor from within a certain content frame and options, and that they will achieve significant learning outcomes and capability and clarity of purpose and commitment and demonstrate that; but they won't have to know the same things and value the same things and go at life the same ways and serve the same causes as everyone else. In particular, they won't be pressed to become replicas of their instructors.

II. Two required course sequences: 12 credits of Educational Studies Seminar; and 6 credits of Educational Discourse. These courses make up 18 credits of the 33 credit major concentration in educational studies. The remaining 15 credits are selected by each

student with the advice of his or her advisor from existing courses in the college. For each the two course sequences there is a catalog description followed by my commentary.

III. An outline of the bachelors degree program within which educational studies is the major concentration. Included in the outline are the overall requirement; the major; the minor; general education; and electives.

I. The Philosophical Underpinning of the Major Concentration in Educational Studies: The Thinking of Robert Henri on Education.

Robert Henri (1865-1929) was an American painter. Not long before his death, the Arts Council of New York designated him one of the top three living American artists. Henri was also a popular and influential teacher of art.

Henri's ideas on art and life, including education, were collected by a former student, Margery Ryerson, in a book published in 1923 entitled *The Art Spirit*. Below are excerpts dealing with education from the 1930 edition of that book: Robert Henri, *The Art Spirit* (New York: J.B. Lippincott, 1930).

When Henri's talks about the life of an artist, or as he calls it, the art spirit, he is not just talking about someone who creates paintings or sculptures; he is talking about a way to live in the world regardless of one's vocation. And when he is talking about education he is not talking just about art education; he is talking about all education, or, more precisely, all schooling.

Since *The Art Spirit* appears to be a compilation of notes jotted down quickly at Henri's lectures, it is, in places syntactically rough and disjointed and repetitive, so I have done some line editing to smooth out the prose and make things clearer and more concise. I've done my best, however, to be true to Henri's ideas. As was the custom back then, Henri used "he" and "man" when referring to people in general. I've left those references as they are rather than try to "update" and "correct" them; plus, I didn't want to get myself involved with convoluted "he and she" sentence constructions. Enough to say, Henri in his remarks was speaking about both men and women.

The excerpts from *The Art Spirit*, Robert Henri speaking:

Life is being wasted. Human beings are not having half the fun that is their due, not making the beautiful things they could make, and each one is not the good news to the others he might be; and that is because we are educated off our natural track. We need another form of education.

We are all different. We are all to see a different life and do different things. Education is self-product, a matter of asking questions and getting the best answers we can get. We read a book, a novel, any book, and we are interested in it to the degree that we find in it answers to our questions.

The school is not a place where students are fitted into the groove of rule and regulation, but rather where personality and originality of vision are encouraged.

Different men must learn different things. Each man must put himself as far as possible in the way of knowing what is known, and he must make choices. Everything is his to use or leave. The school is a place of strengths and weaknesses. There is all sorts of advice, good and bad; and there is advice that will serve one and not another.

The question of development of the art spirit in all walks of life interests me. I mean by this, the development of individual judgment and taste, the love of work for the sake of doing things well, and the tendency toward simplicity and order. If anything can be done to bring the public to a greater consciousness of the relationship between art and life, of the part each person plays by exercising and developing his own personal taste and judgment and not depending on outside authority, it would be well.

No matter how fine a school you are in, you have to educate yourself.

An artist must educate himself. He cannot be educated. He must test things out as they apply to himself. His life is one long investigation of things and his own reactions to them.

The best advice I have ever given students who have studied under me has been this: "Educate yourself, do not let me educate you—use me, do not be used by me."

By my teaching I hope to inspire you to personal activity and to present your vision.

Men either get to know what they want and go after it, or some other persons tell them what they want and drive them after it.

Few people ever mention that they have studied under themselves. Their attitude is, "Here I am, a student, a ball of putty, roll me."

The self-educator judges his own course. He judges advice to him. He judges the evidence presented him. He judges himself. He realizes he is no longer an infant. He is already a man; his own mature development is already in process.

Find out what you really like if you can. Find out what is really important to you. And then sing your song. You will have something to sing about, and your whole heart will be in the singing.

We haven't arrived yet, and it is foolish to believe that we have. The world is not done. Evolution is not complete

Our education has led away from the realization that the mystery of nature is in each man. When we are wiser we not assume to mold them, but will watch their development. And we will learn from them. This habit of conducting nature is a bad one.

It seems to me that before a man tries to express anything to the world, he must recognize in himself an individual, a new one, very distinct from others.

I do not want to see how skillful you are. What is life to you? What reasons and principles have you found? What are your deductions? What projections have you made? What excitement, what pleasure, do you get out of life?

I should like to see every encouragement for those who are fighting to open new ways, every living worker helped to do what he believes in, the best he can.

If you want to be useful, if you want to be an encouragement to the deserving young artist, become interested in his effort and have keen willingness to accept the surprises of its outcome.

The minute we shut people up we are proving our distrust in them. If we believe in them we give them freedom, and through freedom they accomplish. We harness up the horse and destroy his very race instincts. When we want a thrill for our souls we watch the flight of an eagle. It is better that every thought be uttered freely, fearlessly, than be denied utterance for fear of evil. It is only through complete independence that all goodness can be spoken, all purity can be found.

Each man must seek for himself the people who hold the essential beauty. Each man must eventually say to himself, "These are my people."

When a man is full up with what he is talking about he handles language with mastery unusual to him; and it is at such times that he learns language.

Self-acquaintance is a rare condition.

It is a big job to know oneself; no one can ever entirely accomplish it. But to try is to act in the line of evolution. Men can come to know more of themselves, and act more like themselves, and this will be by dint of self-acknowledgment. The only men who are interesting to themselves and to others are those who have been willing to meet themselves squarely. Today man stands in his own way. He puts externally imposed criteria in the way of his own revelation and development. He should push the restraining hands off himself; he should defy fashion and let himself be.

Of course it is not easy to go one's road. Because of our education we continually get off track. But the fight is a good one, and there is joy in it.

A good school offers itself up to the student to be used by him in building himself into a force that will be of stimulating value to the world. The student uses the school, its facilities, its instruction. The instructors are back of him, interested,

watching, encouraging, as ready to learn from him as to teach him. They are anxious for his evidence. They recognize him as a man—another force, a new force. They give him the use of their knowledge and experience. Their only demand is that he work both body and mind to the limit of his endurance to find in himself whatever there is of value; that he find his truest thoughts and the simplest, straightest, fittest means of making a record of them. The goal is that the student becomes the deepest thinker, the kindest appreciator, the clearest and simplest, frankest creator he can be today. Mastering today is the most dependable evidence that the student will master tomorrow and next year and the year following. If the student has dignity, worth, integrity, and courage in his thought and action today, he is worthy of the name student in its finest meaning.

II. Two Required Course Sequences: 12 credits of Educational Studies Seminar; and 6 credits of Educational Discourse Seminar.

- First, the core seminar in the educational studies major. While it has one description it is actually four courses: the first one with a number below 100 (lowest level); the second a 100-level course (intermediate level); and the last two at the 200 level (highest undergraduate level). Following the course description, my commentary.

EDFS 0X, 1XX, 20X, 21X Educational Studies Seminar

Individualized study in three areas: educational perspectives; issues in education; and teaching and learning. Participation in seminar sessions: sharing the outcomes of one's study, and supporting other students' and the instructor's work. 3 credits each. Prerequisites: taken in sequence, enrollment by instructor permission.

Commentary:

This is the core seminar. 12 credits total, required of students in the major. I assume students start taking the first of the four courses during the first semester junior year, and then take one

each semester through the second semester senior year, but an individual student might skip semesters.

Regardless of the number under which a particular student registers, wherever they are in the four-course sequence, all students in the same room with the same instructor(s). One of the three educational studies faculty (I'm thinking three) would instruct the seminar, or probably, the three will want to trade off weeks throughout the academic year. This multi-level arrangement creates a cohort, students farther along providing modeling and mentoring, the sharing of books, etc.; and it facilitates a long-term relationship between students and the program faculty. Administratively this keeps costs down because there is just one instructor (or team of instructors) each semester. This allows for low student numbers, say, ten or twenty students in the whole program, which is a distinct possibility. I think we have to be careful about promising a host of major-specific courses with separate instructors. Creating a model that allows for low enrollment allows us to maintain high acceptance standards and not be scrambling to get students for the sake of numbers.

I'm arguing for individualized study in the four seminars and allowance for individual difference, rather than the idea that everybody should do the same thing and come out alike, with the same exact beliefs, competencies, and predilections. Every scholar in educational studies, or any other field, does not have the same beliefs and commitments, know the same things, and go in the same directions as every other scholar. I think the program should stay away from imposing a particular philosophy or ideology on students. A university should respect students' academic freedom and intellectual integrity, and invite them to encounter diverse perspectives and ways, and to make up their own minds about what is true and right and appropriate for them.

The instructional approach I recommend is for the educational studies faculty to compile a list of materials spanning the three areas (perspectives, issues, and teaching and learning): books, the names of journals, organizations, web sites, people to contact, and so on. The list ought to be of the highest academic quality, and be philosophically, intellectually, and methodologically diverse. I'm thinking enough is on the list to last a diligent student four enrollments—50 sources? 75? As time goes on, faculty and students can augment the list. The list is given to students in the first course,

and students begin moving themselves forward in the list in their own individual ways, and they do this for the four semesters. It is one continuous learning and growth experience; this rather than chopping things up into this block of content or competencies this semester and that block the next semester. The hope is that this arrangement encourages students to be aware, purposeful, and self-directed in contrast to essentially showing up to class and getting the paper in on time, if you know what I mean.

The requirements are that each student engages his or her study rigorously, and studies the three areas concurrently, and participates maturely in the seminar sessions (sharing learning outcomes and getting feedback from other participants and supporting the work of other students and the instructor(s)). Students keep a written log of what they are doing (this book, that chapter, etc.) and, briefly, the outcomes of their work. Their grade for each course is based on meeting these requirements.

In addition, I suggest that each student take a written and oral examination after the second enrollment, at which time they demonstrate significant learning accomplishment in the first two enrollments. Passing this exam is requisite to enrollment in the third seminar. And there would be a similar examination after the fourth seminar covering all four seminars, with an emphasis on the last two. Passing this exam is requisite to successful completion of the major sequence. I realize that deciding whether a student passes or not involves judgment on the part of examiners. But in all areas of life, human beings are trusted to make judgments. In the university, for example, we have masters and doctoral writtens and orals. When you try to take human judgment out of things, people start to be treated as interchangeable parts and moved around like objects.

- Second, the educational discourse seminar. Again, a course description and then commentary.

EDFS 1XX (lower level), 2XX (higher level) Educational Discourse Seminar

In-depth investigation of selected elements of the serious or scholarly dialogue and debate in education: identification of important topics; location of sources—books, articles, reports, Internet postings, individuals, and so on; analyses of

argumentation and research claims; and assessments of merit and significance. Effective contribution to the public discourse in education: deciding what to offer, and how best to express and disseminate it. Each course lasts two semesters; class sessions every two weeks. The creation of one contribution per semester, the last one in 2XX an informed advocacy statement: the student's stand, in writing, on the educational matter of highest importance to him or her. Three credits per course. Prerequisites: 1XX before 2XX; instructor permission for both courses.

Commentary:

What this amounts to is students in the major, over the span of a couple years, meeting about every two weeks, doing two things concurrently with regard to the public discourse, the flow of thought and assertion, in the field of education: learning to tap selected aspects of what's out there in depth; and learning how effectively to contribute to, add to, what's out there, learning how to become more than just a knowledge consumer or critic; put your best thinking out there for the edification and scrutiny of the world.

My experience has been that undergraduates (well, graduate students too) need work on all of this. They can get to the bookstore and buy the required books, but they aren't good at figuring out what is worth learning and seeking it out and making sense of it, especially non-book, periodical, short-form material. They aren't good at following an argument or making sense of research findings. They aren't good at deciding on the merits of things and what they mean, their significance, their implications. And they aren't good at digging into things in depth. So I am seeing the value of giving them a couple of years to practice doing this and, at the same time, learning about education, or least some areas of education, in some depth (the seminar is more a general, inclusive study, and it is from an list of possible sources). For topics, I'm thinking they go deep into something that comes up in the seminar course, or that they read about in the newspaper, or that comes up in another course they are taking, etc. The key is that they not simply replicate what they are doing elsewhere but rather dig into it. We'll probably want to have students keeping logs of what they are doing in all of their courses to try to assure that the pieces mesh, compliment.

The other part of this course (or better, two courses, each lasting a year, two semesters, an extended credit arrangement) involves getting practice at making contributions to the fact and idea flow in the field: deciding what to express and getting informed enough to be able to express something worthwhile, and getting better at writing and speaking clearly, and getting one's public expressions out to the world. Besides learning how to do that, each student, at least once a semester, produces a contribution to the public discourse in education: an article, Internet postings, a speech, whatever the best form.

On that last contribution I refer to in the course description, the advocacy statement, or perhaps it should be called a vision statement: I see that as a capstone experience in the program. After studying education for a couple years or so, the student says to the world, "Here's where I stand on the most important matter I can think to talk about at this point in my life, and I'm not just riffing, I've studied it hard and I know what's going on, and I'm not kidding, I mean what I'm saying." This would be written—I'm thinking ten to fifteen pages--and given to everybody in the major, both faculty and students, and, probably best, read at a public presentation, and/or discussed at a colloquium. In any case, this is a major piece of work.

Note that I'm not advocating a six-credit thesis as a finish, anything like that. I would rather have students producing things from day one, and getting feedback on they come up with, and then doing it again and trying to improve, and doing this over a span of couple of years rather a one-shot deal at the end where you don't get a chance to learn from your mistakes and give it another go.

As with the core seminar, all students, regardless of whether they are registered for 1XX or 2XX, are in the same room with the same instructor(s).

Note that the major only requires two classrooms per semester—one for the seminar and the other for educational discourse--with one instructor in each classroom. Other enrollments in the major are in existing courses. The seminar can be taken under four different numbers, and educational discourse under two different numbers. Students register for educational discourse in the fall. The course meets every couple of weeks for the academic year for three credits, extended credit designation recorded after the first semester or enrollment. If student numbers were, say, eight or ten juniors and

the same number of seniors, that would still make for enrollments in these two classrooms in the 16-20 range, and thus be cost effective.

III. An Outline of the Bachelors Degree Program within which Educational Studies is the Major Concentration

Five things of note before the program description:

--I think there ought to be a three-member (or perhaps two-member) educational studies faculty. If everybody is on the educational studies faculty, as a practical matter nobody is on it. We need some people to own this program/major, look out for it, be responsible for it, run it, fix it when it's broken, constantly improve it, handle recruitment, advise, approve programs, and teach in the core elements.

--I hope we don't load up on education courses and scrimp on general education and electives. I find that arts college general requirements and distribution requirements are usually better than those in other colleges, and I am prone to adopt the arts college package as the general education requirement even if this is a college of education program. But as a practical matter, I suppose, that is not likely to play. So I put here that, in effect, this program will accept the general education requirement of any college or university. With that said, if a first year student were to come into this major, I think it makes sense to consider seriously holding him/her to the arts college's general education requirement.

--I also hope electives aren't squeeze out, which often happens in colleges of education. If students have fewer than 24 elective credits—courses apart from the major, minor, and general education--I see a problem.

--It is common practice for colleges granting degrees to have a residency requirement—something like students must be registered in this college for their last forty-five credits.

--An issue with all college of education programs, because they all involve enrollment in other colleges, is the necessity to obtain

permission for educational studies students to take courses in the arts college and other colleges. That is an administrative matter.

The program statement:

The Educational Studies Program

The Educational Studies Program leads to a bachelors of science degree from the College of Education [although it could operate out of some other unit]. The program has the following components:

- *Total credits.* One-hundred-twenty-two credits, including two credits of physical education [or whatever a university requires of bachelor's degrees].
- *Major Concentration.* Educational studies. Thirty-three credits. An academic study of education. The focus is on formal schooling, including post-secondary schooling, but also includes concern for other elements that educate or socialize: among them, the family and peers, social and cultural circumstances, religious and political institutions, and the mass media. Required: 12 credits of Educational Studies Seminar (EDFS 0X, 1XX, 20X, and 21X); 6 credits of Educational Discourse Seminar (EDFS 1XX and 2XX); and 15 credits of courses chosen from existing offerings in the College of Education and approved by the educational studies faculty.
- *Minor Concentration.* Any existing minor in the university, or a self-designed 18-credit minor made up of existing College of Education courses and approved by the educational studies faculty; or, by approval of the educational studies faculty, a minor completed at another university.
- *General education.* Any existing general education requirement in the university; or, by approval of the educational studies faculty, an existing general education requirement from another university.
- *Electives.* Any courses offered at the University of XXXXXXXX or, by approval of the educational studies faculty, taken from another university. It is expected that students will take 24-30 credits of electives.

