

E.

LIBERAL LEARNING...

About Section E...

This section addresses the second major component of the MA in Educating Adults (MAEA) Program—
LIBERAL LEARNING in Reflective Practice.

Subsections include...

- ▶ Introduction to LIBERAL LEARNING in REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

- ▶ DOMAINS of Liberal Learning...
 - ⇒ AGENCY Effectiveness
 - ⇒ COLLABORATION Effectiveness
 - ⇒ FLEXIBILITY Effectiveness
 - ⇒ INQUIRY Effectiveness

- ▶ LIBERAL LEARNING SEMINARS per Domain

- ▶ Seeking Feedback---from Self & Others

Introduction to ***LIBERAL LEARNING in REFLECTIVE PRACTICE***

Even as professionals are increasingly called upon to contribute competence or mastery grounded in their particular areas of expertise (*professional* knowledge and skill), they are also increasingly called upon to make their contributions from an ever broadening and deepening context of *personal* effectiveness.

This broader context is the aim of Liberal Learning—to “liberate” oneself from the single point of view and action in order to expand perspectives and skills from which to engage in ever-improving decision-making and reflective practice.

DOMAINS of LIBERAL LEARNING...

Within the MAEA Program, ***Liberal Learning in Reflective Practice*** includes four domains:

Domain I: AGENCY Effectiveness (sections of LLS-410)

Seminar sections in the Agency Domain aim to explore various dimensions/dynamics associated with knowing, developing and engaging oneself as an “agent” in one’s experience and contribution. Central questions include: Who am I and/or who am I having myself be? Who am I becoming and/or who am I having myself become? What habits of mind, attitude and behavior am I choosing and reinforcing versus becoming victim to and stuck within? Am I living my life or is my life living me? etc. Embedded in these questions are core concepts regarding personal efficacy, empowerment and accountability.

Agency Effectiveness involves facets including, but not limited to, the following—

- a) Understanding agency.
- b) Taking responsibility for achieving goals (including learning goals) and adding value.
- c) Identifying and using a variety of learning resources.
- d) Turning specific events into experiences for learning.
- e) Participating proactively and creating networks.
- f) Managing time and tasks to fulfill commitments.
- g) Finding and using standards to track progress and assess effectiveness.
- h) Accepting responsibility for outcomes (positive and negative) of actions.

Domain II: COLLABORATION Effectiveness (sections of LLS-420)

Seminar sections in the Collaboration Domain aim to explore various dimensions/dynamics associated with working together (in dyads, small groups and/or organizations) to achieve shared objectives. Central questions include: How do key factors (e.g., environment, membership, process/structure, communication, trust, decision-making, etc.) impact collaborative success? How are differences surfaced and bridged? What helps/hinders collaboration? How is collaboration evolving in virtual settings? etc. Embedded in these questions are core concepts regarding interpersonal, organizational and cross-cultural dynamics and processes.

Collaboration Effectiveness involves facets including, but not limited to, the following—

- a) Understanding collaboration.
- b) Working together with others to achieve shared goals.
- c) Encouraging and contributing to open dialogue with a wide variety of contributors/ stakeholders.
- d) Balancing one’s own interests with others’ interests.
- e) Crediting others for their contributions and accomplishments.
- f) Gaining trust and support of others.
- g) Making and fulfilling agreements.
- h) Navigating conflict and valuing human differences.

Domain III: FLEXIBILITY Effectiveness (sections of LLS-440)

Seminar sections in the Flexibility Domain aim to explore various dimensions/dynamics associated with the process of valuing and translating valuing into believing and acting. Central questions include: What do I (and others) value, how and on what basis? How are values derived, developed, revised, expanded, retired, etc.? What emotional, cognitive and/or behavioral flexibility is involved in considering differences with the intent to understand them—not necessarily to change them? Embedded in these questions are core concepts regarding ethical reasoning, values-clarification/formation, decision-making and priority-setting.

Flexibility Effectiveness involves facets including, but not limited to, the following—

- a) Understanding flexibility.
- b) Analyzing messy situations and applying knowledge from multiple perspectives, models and theories as well as roles, responsibilities, values and contexts.
- c) Making connections between seemingly disparate entities—particularly with regard to finding shared values.
- d) Generating and entertaining multiple interpretations for any proposition, assertion or observation.
- e) Devising well-framed problems and inventing possible solutions.
- f) Adapting to various situations based on awareness/examination of learning processes and values dynamics.
- g) Engaging values-congruent actions and responses within and across various settings.
- h) Broadening/deepening repertoire of values and actions in support of making decisions, taking risks and growing personal/professional capacities.

Domain IV: INQUIRY Effectiveness (sections of LLS-450a + 450b)

Seminar sections in the Inquiry Domain aim to explore various dimensions/dynamics associated with investigating sources of information and conducting primary research. Central questions include: How do I formulate incisive questions? How do I find and gather relevant and credible information? How do I assess/analyze information and its sources—including my own experience as a source? How do I make sense of confirming and disconfirming information? How do I differentiate knowledge from opinion from reasoned judgment? Embedded in these questions are core concepts regarding the authority of systematic observation/inquiry and evaluated experience.

Inquiry Effectiveness involves facets including, but not limited to, the following—

- a) Understanding inquiry.
- b) Demonstrating curiosity and willingness to question assumptions.
- c) Identifying questions for investigation.
- d) Applying creative and analytic processes to investigate questions.
- e) Developing and evaluating conclusions informed by the inquiry process.
- f) Using inquiry processes to reframe old questions, frame new questions and open new perspectives.
- g) Managing confirmation bias by deliberately seeking out multiple sources of data and considering disconfirming perspectives.
- h) Evaluating/re-evaluating 'lessons learned' and applying such to future practice and inquiry.

LIBERAL LEARNING SEMINARS per Domain

Graduate students from various other graduate programs utilize SCPS's Graduate Liberal Learning Seminars (18 credit hours) to pursue learning with respect to the domains listed above. For SCPS's three graduate programs (MA in Applied Professional Studies/MAAPS; MA in Educating Adults/MAEA; and MS in Applied Technology/MSAT), the plan forward involves the following:

- a. Regarding ✓**INQUIRY Effectiveness**, graduate students participate in the following two required seminars:

LLS-450a ♦ Finding & Assessing Information (2 cr hrs)

This seminar provides participants with advanced skills in collecting, analyzing and synthesizing literature and resources in their respective area(s) of practice. Among these skills are: searching and accessing various sources; discerning credibility of sources; storing and retrieving information for oneself; constructing thematic literature reviews; and, citing sources using APA style. *[Note: This seminar is typically completed during a students' first quarter of enrollment. See Section D.]*

LLS-450b ♦ Applying Systematic Inquiry (in Professional Practice) (4 cr hrs)

Through this seminar, participants explore the design and implementation process for engaging systematic inquiry in professional practice. Emphasis is placed on: developing practice-based questions; aligning questions to qualitative data-collecting methodologies; adapting methodologies to practice settings; collecting and analyzing data; and, interpreting findings to inform future practices. The roles of theoretical, conceptual and ethical frameworks in the inquiry process are also considered.

- b. Regarding the remaining required 12 credit hours (at minimum) in the Liberal Learning portion of each graduate program, students choose from a variety of Liberal Learning Seminars (LLS) offered within each of the other three domains:
- ✓ **AGENCY Effectiveness** (various related topics addressed via sections of **LLS-410**)
 - ✓ **COLLABORATION Effectiveness** (various related topics addressed via sections of **LLS-420**)
 - ✓ **FLEXIBILITY Effectiveness** (various related topics addressed via sections of **LLS-440**)
- c. Seminars are offered throughout the year. Meeting in various formats (weeknights, weekends, on-campus, online, etc.), 2 credit-hour seminars meet for five 3.25hr sessions (with break per session) and 4 credit-hour seminars meet for ten 3.25hr sessions (with break per session).
- d. Seminar descriptions are contained in the LLS Planning Schedule. (See Index—*Calendar & Planning Schedules*.) Additional details per seminar (topic, schedule, assignments, assessment considerations, etc.) are contained within each seminar's respective syllabus. Specific syllabi are posted on the SCPS website approximately two weeks prior to the beginning of the quarter in which related seminars are being offered.
- e. Upon successful completion of the Liberal Learning requirement (18 credit hours minimum), students may receive a "**CERTIFICATE OF ACHIEVEMENT IN LIBERAL LEARNING FOR PROFESSIONALS.**" To do so, students are to email their requests to the Graduate Programs Office (scpsgrad@depaul.edu) and include their name, ID# and name of certificate requested.

NOTE: The Liberal Learning Component (18 cr hrs) is not available for waiver or substitution by other courses (transfer or otherwise). Students may complete extra Liberal Learning Seminars beyond the 18 credit hour minimum required within the Liberal Learning portion of their graduate program. Such extra LL study might qualify as a learning activity in relation to a designated competence in one's focus area or as an elective, i.e., with the approval of one's faculty mentor and in accordance with provisions outlined in Guidebook Section F. *[NOTE: The same LL seminar cannot serve to fulfill both the LL requirement and a learning activity for other aspects of one's program—focus area or elective.]*

SEEKING FEEDBACK---from Self & Others

While students' performance in the Liberal Learning Seminars is assessed in terms of each seminar's content (per syllabus), students are encouraged to return periodically to the facets listed per domain (on pages E-2 & E-3) to both: (a) gauge their own ongoing practice; and, (b) plan steps for ongoingly taking that practice "up a notch." In this regard, students are encouraged to seek feedback and suggestions from themselves (via targeted reflection) and from others. Regarding the latter, seeking feedback from "others" might include requesting input from individuals *within the program* (fellow students, seminar faculty, faculty mentors, professional advisors, etc.) as well as from those *beyond the program* (work/professional associates, supervisors, community colleagues, family members, friends, etc.)