

Literacies in the Curriculum - Introduction

In a world characterized by constant changes in society, politics, science and technology, Park University reaffirms its heritage of educating students to be effectively functioning individuals in their personal lives, professions and local and global communities. The University also reaffirms its ideal of the education of the total person by providing students with basic personal and professional skills and knowledge, as well as an awareness of and appreciation for significant achievements in the arts and sciences. To achieve its goals, the College has established analytical and critical thinking, community and civic responsibility, scientific inquiry, ethics and values, and literary and artistic expression literacies as basic components in the education of its students.

The University recognizes that not all students are adequately prepared to meet the rigors of the pursuit of the literacies. Therefore, opportunities are provided in its curriculum for students to develop their basic skills (writing, reading, speaking, listening, and computing) in their pursuit of the literacies.

1. Analytical and Critical Thinking

Analytical and Critical Thinking at Park means:

1. Understanding and mastery of the basic skills in communication technology, and information management.
2. Recognition of the diversity in the processes and methods of critical thinking and problem-solving, and recognition of standards of excellence.
3. Appreciation of the history and variety of approaches for examining and using information, and their technological applications in contemporary life.
4. Acquisition of tools for gathering, retrieving, evaluating, and communicating information and data for various purposes. These tools should include the basic skills in writing, speaking, listening, computing and the use of computers, and problem solving.

5. Analyzing and integrating knowledge gathered from different cultures.

The student with critical literacy will be able to gather, evaluate, and communicate information effectively; meet the basic computing demands of contemporary life; know standards of excellence; recognize varieties of problem-solving strategies; and be able to contribute to desirable changes or help preserve and transmit fundamental knowledge for the good of society.

2. Community and Civic Responsibility

Community and Civic Responsibility at Park means:

1. Understanding of the working of American social, political, and economic systems.
2. Recognition of the existence of diverse alternative systems and their necessary global relationships.
3. Appreciation of the geographical and historical roots which are shaping these systems.
4. Acquisition of tools for responsible citizenship involvement and for participation in economic and social endeavors.
5. Analyzing and integrating the diversity found globally, including values, beliefs, ideas, and worldviews.

The student with community and civic literacy will be able to see the complexity of social, political, and economic systems and problems on the national and international scene, and then develop ways that would contribute to the solution of such problems through effective citizenship participation.

3. Scientific Inquiry

Scientific Inquiry at Park means:

1. Understanding of the nature and role of scientific evidence in the pursuit of knowledge.
2. Recognition of the importance of the scientific method of argument and modeling process.

3. Appreciation of the origins of scientific inquiry and method and seeing their continuing presence in the mutual interaction between human society and its physical environment.
4. Acquisition of tools for successful involvement in scientific pursuits of the scientific community.
5. Understanding the contributions of multiple civilizations to what we hold to be scientific knowledge.

The student with scientific inquiry literacy will be able to know the nature of scientific evidence and the scientific method of inquiry, recognize their roles in approaching problems in human society and its physical environment, and use such knowledge in personal scientific pursuits and as a member of the scientific community.

4. Ethics and Values

Ethics and Values at Park mean:

1. Understanding of the importance of value concerns in human life, and the ability to distinguish them from factual matters.
2. Recognition of the major ways proposed for resolving value questions, and the ability to evaluate them and use them where appropriate.
3. Appreciation of the diversity of value systems and their interconnection with the cultures in which they are found, yet openness to the possibility that there may be common goals and principles that can serve as the basis for inter-cultural judgments.
4. Acquisition of tools for analyzing value questions, and acquisition of a set of personal values that are continually held up for review even as one tries to live by them.

The student with values literacy is sensitive to value questions, appreciatively and critically aware of differing value systems, in possession of tools for analyzing value questions, and engaged in the

process of putting these things together into a constant set of personal values and testing them for life.

5. Literary and Artistic Expression

Literary and Artistic Expression at Park means:

1. Understanding of the great themes and metaphors of human experience in various forms of aesthetic expressions, and ability to use them to enhance the understanding of life.
2. Recognition of diversities in the visual, verbal, and performing arts and the origins and reconciliation of such diversities.
3. Appreciation of the history of aesthetics as records and shapers of languages and cultures.
4. Acquisition of tools for perceptive and open-minded enjoyment of aesthetic experiences, and tools for creation of aesthetic works that reflect awareness of self and social contexts.

The student with literary and artistic expression is one who is acquainted with various aesthetic human experiences and expressions in their historical and cultural contexts, is able to enjoy them with informed judgments, and also able to contribute to such experiences and expressions.

Conclusion

The literacies defined and described above are intended to bring about education for success in professions, productive membership in communities, and satisfaction and fulfillment in personal lives.

Two of these literacies (1.analytical and critical thinking and 2.ethics and values) are perceived to cut across disciplines and departments, while the other three (3.community and civic responsibility, 4.scientific inquiry, and 5. literary and artistic expression) literacies address major academic concerns. Students with these literacies should be able to succeed in communicating, computing and problem solving, clarifying values, using the arts, functioning within social institutions, functioning in a global society, and using the sciences and technology.