

GENERAL EDUCATION PHILOSOPHY

The collegiate experience nurtures a yearning for knowledge that lasts a lifetime, and is more than the sum of its parts.¹ A liberal arts education teaches students how to reason and learn through studies that are intended to provide knowledge and foster intellectual abilities, rather than more specialized occupational or professional skills. This happens both inside and outside the classroom, as students meet and learn with a diverse array of peers and teachers. The liberal arts provide the foundation for future academic experiences, and help develop the skills, aptitudes and perspectives characteristic of an educated person.

Blue Ridge Community College's general education offerings intentionally strive to develop this liberal arts perspective. The program exposes students to a broad body of knowledge of the major social, cultural, historical, and scientific forces that have shaped human identity and the world. General education enables students to integrate knowledge to address fundamental questions about the nature of the world and its inhabitants. Blue Ridge Community College believes general education is an important component for all students whether they are going immediately into the workforce or continuing their education.

The implementation of general education differs depending upon the type of associate degree or diploma program that students are interested in pursuing. In diploma and associate of applied science degree programs, faculty employ general education courses to introduce students to the concept of a liberal education while simultaneously striving to help students integrate knowledge and apply broad academic concepts in a practical manner in the world of work. In comprehensive transfer degree programs (A.A.&S. and A.S. degrees) faculty not only introduce the liberal arts perspective but also strive to provide a depth to general knowledge that prepares students for upper-level educational experiences at the bachelor's degree level and beyond. In transfer programs, faculty strive to help students integrate the interdisciplinary nature of theoretical concepts and reveal how historical, philosophical, cultural and other academic concepts influence human interactions.

¹ Gaff, J.G. (2006). Strong foundations: Twelve principles for effective general education programs.