

## Liberal Education Articles

Colour Code: **Scholarly Article** **Online**

**Article**

**Resource**

**Essays/Papers**

**Q**otes- articles with an orange Q have a matching quote down below

**B**olded are favorites

### Breadth

(2015, September 16). **Employers value soft skills, but don't seek them out, expert says: Workplaces need a balance of STEM and liberal arts educations, says Michael Bloom.** *CBC News*. Retrieved from <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/novascotia/employers-value-soft-skills-butdontseek-them-out%20-expert-says-1.3230939> **Q**

“The skills that are developed in a liberal arts program are often incredibly valuable in the workplace.” - CBC News

A short CBC article that focuses on an interview with the Conference Board of Canada’s vice president of industry and business strategy, Michael Bloom. While having a focused degree may get you a job, not having skills such as teamwork, problem solving, and communication (all learned with a liberal education) is cited as the main reason people are let go from their positions, and having these skills is the reason employees are promoted.

Berrett, D. (2015, September 25). **Faculty Members See Promise in Unified Way to Measure Student Learning.** *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Retrieved from <http://www.chronicle.com.ezproxy.uleth.ca/article/FacultyMembersSeePromisein/233377/>

Dan Berrett studies a new rubric used to test student's skills and abilities which replaces a grading schematic used in standardized testing to analyze student success. The skills that were tested were divided into three areas: critical thinking, quantitative literacy and written communication. Overall, four-year institutions tended to perform better than two-year college programs.

Caron, R. M. (2009). **Call for Change in Liberal Education.** *College Teaching*, 58(1), 1-2.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/87567550903253627>

Caron proposes the introduction of courses on public health into liberal education. She argues that this will benefit students through the awareness of health care systems, nutrition, appropriate housing, and sustainable inner-city areas. This would increase both connections and critical thinking across disciplines. She concludes by stating that by complementing liberal education with public health it will cultivate life tools in students who will be able to apply them to create a healthier world.

Crutcher, R. A. (2011). **Fluency Across the Boundaries: A Case for Liberal Education in the 21st Century.** *The Presidency, (Winter)*, 17-21. Retrieved May 10, 2018  
<http://www.acenet.edu/the-presidency/columns-and-features/Pages/Fluency-Across-the-Boundaries-A-Case-for-Liberal-Education-in-the-21st-Century.aspx>

Beginning first with his own experience with liberal education, Crutcher advocates the need to provide all students with a liberal education which covers a broad range of topics. While supplementing his work with interviews from other academics and LEAP advocacy initiatives he highlights the need to prepare students to meet the challenges of the 21st century through liberal education. He highlights the practical benefits of a liberal education, and its relevance to both the workforce and to good citizenry. He concludes by stating that for the sake of future sustainability, liberal education must be made accessible to all students.

Drummond, D., Finnie, R., & Weingarten, H. (2015, October 20). **Canada must develop people with the skills the modern job market requires.** *The Globe and Mail*. Retrieved from  
<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/rob-commentary/canada-mustdevelop-people-with-the-skills-the-modern-job-market-requires/article26872675/>. Q

“While postsecondary institutions typically claim that their graduates are literate, numerate, resilient, problem solvers and good communicators, recent evidence suggests that much more could be done.”- Drummond, Finnie and Weingarten

Don Drummond, Ross Finnie and Harvey Weingarten point out the lack of skill development in graduates. The skills needed in our labour markets are those attached to the liberal arts; these include literacy, numeracy, communication, critical thinking, and problem solving. They suggest

three ways to advance the alignment between the skills and competencies of the modern workplace in Canada: better information on graduate outcomes, better evidence-based understanding of new skills, and postsecondary needs to do a better job of measuring cognitive and transferable skills.

Durden, W. G. (2012, November 26). **A Useful Liberal Arts**. *Inside Higher Ed*.  
<https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2012/11/26/essay-idea-useful-liberal-arts>

Durden advocates for liberal education through Benjamin Rush and his purpose behind the foundation of Dickinson College. Durden then briefly explains the opposition and some of their points for stating that liberal education is useless and uses his personal story to state otherwise. Durden's personal journey shows that his liberal education training has allowed him to fulfill many positions he did not have specific training in and allowed him to be in a job that did not exist previously.

Fischer, K. (2012). **Bucking Cultural Norms, Asia Tries Liberal Arts**. *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 58(23). Retrieved from  
<https://www.chroniclecom.ezproxy.uleth.ca/article/Bucking-CulturalNormsAsia/130667>.

Fischer describes the reforms that are taking place at some Asian universities. These reforms require a shift away from test-taking students to students that can innovate and invent to adapt to a changing world. She describes liberal education similarities between both the west and the way students had been educated historically in the east before focusing on liberal arts initiatives that are making their way into Chinese universities and high schools. She does so by focusing on specific case-studies, outlining some challenges being faced in the education system while doing so. Fischer concludes her article by stating that the liberal education system in Asia will take a different approach from the West, which will allow it to fit into the differing Asian cultures it will be placed in.

Gordon, D. (2012). **The Confidence Factor in Liberal Education**. *Liberal Education*, 98(3), 4247.  
<https://www.aacu.org/publications-research/periodicals/confidence-factorliberaleducation>

In his article, Gordon highlights the benefits of pursuing a liberal education. He utilizes case studies such as that of Steve Jobs and the rising embrace of liberal education in Asia. He

concludes by making a clarification regarding the meaning of liberal education and puts emphasis on the liberal arts as freedom, moving the discipline away from a narrow definition.

**Hadley, D. W. (2008). From Tumble to Dance: The Unsung 'Dance Steps' Fostered by Liberal Arts Education. *Journal of Education*, 188(2), 31-54.**  
<http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/002205740818800205>

Hadley outlines the capabilities that students develop within liberal education. She divides her explanations into various human skills related to the body. These include skills cultivated in the ear, the eye, the hand, the heart, the mouth, and the mind. She concludes by stating that these skills are supplemented with other liberal education outcomes but that the small-scale changes she had outlined do take place in liberal education and prepare students for lessons learned beyond college.

**Klassen, T. R. (2015, October 14) The perceived disconnect between the classroom and the 'real world'. *University Affairs*. Retrieved from**  
<https://www.universityaffairs.ca/opinion/in-my-opinion/the-perceived-disconnectbetween-the-classroom-and-the-real-world/> Q

“What (students) fail to grasp is (that) nearly all the skills learned in the classroom are exactly those needed for an interesting, challenging and well-paying career.” - Klassen

Klassen addresses the fears that students have regarding their futures after university. He points out that classroom learning invests in skills such as research, writing skills, dealing with people, meeting deadlines, and communicating effectively which will guarantee success in the workplace. He suggests that students entering business schools in the hopes of jobs would be better off pursuing their interests in university, and in doing so, preparing themselves for the real world.

**Kronyk, R. (2016, January 6). Giving the liberal arts their due: Will corporate Alberta help liberal arts graduates enter the business world? Should they? *Alberta Venture*.**  
Retrieved from <https://albertaventure.com/2016/01/giving-the-liberal-arts-their-due/> Q

“A liberal arts student can be more valuable because of how they are taught to think.” - Kronyk

Kronyk's article points out that there is a severe lack of funding for liberal arts programs across Alberta. Liberal arts students are extremely valuable to corporations. Their ability to think critically and be adaptable to constant changes are crucial to society. Corporations can understand the importance of a liberal arts student; educators need to also connect the work they do to the work of employment.

Morley, M. E. (2012). **The High Cost of Quantitative Illiteracy.** *AWM Newsletter*, 42(4), 8-10.

Morley seeks to show the serious consequences of quantitative illiteracy through her overview of recent academic studies on quantitative illiteracy. She presents works which show consequences related to mortgage crisis, children receiving incorrect doses of medicine, and worsening diabetes control for quantitatively illiterate patients. She draws attention to the troubling number of adults with quantitative illiteracy and warns that society needs to begin taking quantitative illiteracy seriously instead of turning it into a joke.

**Moro, Anna. (2018, June 14). The humanities are becoming more important. Here's why.** *World Economic Forum*. Retrieved from <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2018/06/how-a-humanities-degree-will-serve-you-in-a-disruptive-economy/>

Moro argues that the skills that come from studying the humanities are essential skills which are sought after in the job market. Investors state that workers who can put information into human context, have higher empathy, emotional intelligence and critical thinking are needed. The humanities provide students with these skills, which are highly transferable and helpful for learners to adapt to a disruptive economy.

Oxtoby, D. W. (2012, Spring). **The Place of the Arts.** *Liberal Education*, 98(2), 36-41.  
<https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.uleth.ca/docview/1081331599?pq-origsite=summon>

Oxtoby writes and argues for arts to be core within university and college curriculums. He advocates strongly that there should be an emphasis on creating and making art, not only observing and reading about the arts. Although it might not always be the most comfortable of endeavors, Oxtoby says that the arts will impact society, help students push their boundaries, give students experiential education and teach them creativity.

Peterson, P. M. (2012, June 18). **Liberal-Arts Education: Has the Global Migration Stalled?** *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Retrieved from <http://chronicle.com/article/LiberalArtsEducation-Has/132327>.

Peterson explores the adaptability of liberal education in the wake of global resurgence, focusing on China. She raises questions surrounding the compatibility of Western liberal arts to Chinese cultural studies and deeply integrated ideological views. However, countries facing the forces of globalization require liberal education to combat precarious hyperspecialization and to improve nation building. She concludes by stating that liberal education needs to adapt and adjust to local contexts if it wants to continue its global migration.

**Rawlings III, H. R. (2017, December 21). Stop Defending the Liberal Arts.** *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Retrieved from <https://www-chroniclecom.ezproxy.uleth.ca/article/Stop-Defending-the-Liberal/242080> 

“A liberal education demands that you decide — agree or disagree? Find the nuances in the issue, and voice them. Challenge authority. Argue forcefully — and with wit and reason. Write clearly and persuasively about your research, ideas, conclusions, interpretations.” - **Hunter R. Rawlings III**

Rawlings presents five essential components of liberal education throughout the article. These are liberation, irreverence, pleasure, provocation, courage. Rawlings uses a humanities lens to convey these essential components and accentuate their prominence in liberal education. The use of poems and short phrases create a deeper meaning for these essentials and their importance. Rawlings also crafts thoughts about our role as educators in liberal education.

Roth, M. S. (2014, June 3). **A World Without Liberal Education?** *Wesleyan University*. <http://roth.blogs.wesleyan.edu/2014/06/03/a-world-without-liberal-education/>

Roth addresses an interviewer’s question regarding specialized education and argues, using a variety of examples and speakers (such as CEOs), that learning must be open-ended. Through his examples Roth discuss the importance of breadth for both the workforce and society itself.

Seifert, T. A., Goodman, K. M., Lindsay, N., Jorgensen, J. D., Wolniak, G. C., Pascarella, E. T., & Blaich, C. (2008). **The Effects of Liberal Arts Experiences on Liberal Arts Outcomes.** *Research in Higher Education*, 49(2), 107-125.

<https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007%2Fs11162-007-9070-7.pdf>

Seifert and his colleagues studied the effect that an institutional ethos of liberal arts has on student outcomes associated with the liberal arts. They utilized Pascarella et al's study as a basis before collecting data in three phases from four participating institutions. The first phase was demographic information, the second a college experience questionnaire which measured a range of classroom experiences, openness to diversity and literacy, and the third phase was a monitored session in which students completed one of two assessment batteries. They found a liberal arts experience positively affected intercultural effectiveness, inclination to inquire, and lifelong learning, well-being, and leadership. They conclude by stating that their study provides empirical evidence for the benefits of a liberal arts education.

Shinn, L. D. (2012, June). **Liberal Education in the Age of the Unthinkable.** *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning*, 44(4), 15-21.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/00091383.2012.691858>

Shinn proposes liberal education as the solution to unexpected, rapid, and complex global changes, using the metaphor of "black swans" to label these situations. He focuses first on the financial black swan of the global recession and the technological black swan of the Internet that require higher education to shift. He advocates for flexible, innovative and adaptive liberal education in the face of these challenges and warns against narrow undergraduate specialization. He goes further to state that institutions themselves should become more flexible and interdisciplinary in themselves, using Berea College and Arizona State University as case studies. Finally, he outlines traditional implementations to this reorganization and concludes by stating that traditional education is no longer efficient nor effective, and that liberal education should be embraced in order to provide the learning that students require.

Working Draft. (2000). **The Case for Quantitative Literacy.** Accessed on May 4, 2018 from <http://www.stolaf.edu/other/ql/case.html>.

This paper argues that quantitative literacy is increasingly relevant in our developing world. It provides a brief history of quantitative literacy before beginning to describe it as a habit of mind which allows math to be connected to the real world. Elements, expressions, skills and context

are then discussed. The author then concludes by addressing some challenges which face quantitative literacy in our modern context.

White, L. (2015, May 13). **Developing 21st century skills**. *Toronto Sun*. Retrieved from <http://www.torontosun.com/2015/05/13/developing-21st-century-skills> 

“We were starting to hear from employers who hired new grads that their soft skills weren’t as developed as hard skills,” says Richard Almonte, professor and co-ordinator of communication. “Our business students were excellent at using accounting software and so on but maybe weren’t as adapt at personal interactions.” -White

White writes about the development of 21st century skills in students across Canada. Focusing on Sheridan Art College and George Brown College Centre for Business, which have mandatory classes for students to take outside of their degree in order to broaden their skill set. By doing this, students are able to develop the skills the employers are looking for and be able to launch and maintain a successful career.