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Liberal Arts

Does a liberal arts education have any useful purpose in the life of a future educator? Within this document, the goal is to determine the liberal arts value. Liberal arts is defined by the Merriam-Webster Dictionary as "the studies (as language, philosophy, history, literature, abstract science) in a college or university intended to provide chiefly general knowledge and to develop the general intellectual capacities (as reason and judgement) as opposed to professional or vocational skills"(Merriam-Webster Dictionary 415.) In more general terms, the liberal arts is a way to develop and create a well-rounded, knowledgeable person through a vast selection of subjects. This curriculum is one that Manchester College uses within its educational requirements. Some may wonder if this has anything to do with being a good, affective educator, and what significance liberal arts plays in teacher preparation. When considering this question, the answer may be surprising. The liberal arts program focuses on creating a wide knowledge base for those who decided to attend such a program; therefore, Manchester College focuses on helping future teachers understand the different ideas and concepts that may be presented within each personal classroom setting. By

understanding the outside world and concepts different than one's own, the liberal arts program will produce prepared teachers who will be more efficient in communicating, teaching, and exploring the world with their students.

By being educated in a liberal arts curriculum, Manchester College's future educators are more prepared because of the experiences which have been presented to them. Without the liberal arts education, many of the opportunities of the general educational requirements would be missed by those who attended a non-liberal arts facility. These experiences include a deeper look into the world ideas and beliefs. The curriculum focuses on those aspects of art and philosophy which provide useful information which could be potentially valuable in a classroom setting. Liberal art classes provide knowledgeable information that could be linked to everyday life which could also be shared with those future students who may find the information useful. This type of curriculum also provides useful answers to the well known reality show, "Are You Smarter Than a Fifth Grader?" which may be a useful tool to use in the classroom.

Does a liberal arts courses alter one's way of thinking about himself or herself, the world, or others around them? This would depend on the individual. Experiencing the Arts is a course that focuses on the world and history of art. This course helps to develop an understanding of art, artists, artistic revolutions, and some historical components of arts. Some of the information maybe transferable to other components of a teaching career, but the individual must decide on its worth. Philosophy courses

open one's eyes to viewing and thinking of the world in different perspectives. Many of these course allow the future teacher to become familiar with others's viewpoints, beliefs, and ways of understanding. This will be useful when approaching different issues that may occur in one's classroom. It helps to change the way an individual approaches problems, views others's opinions, and the world's different cultures and ideas.

After attending a liberal arts college, it is easier to view other diverse population's views and beliefs. The idea of a liberal arts curriculum improves an individual's ability to be compassionate to others' cultural beliefs. By gaining the knowledge base from the liberal art's courses, each person gains a better understanding of the world. He or she gains new concepts and ideas which can create the well-rounded person. Manchester College encourage personal growth and understanding of cultures different from one's own. The college encourages personal growth, understanding, and future exploration of the world beyond the classroom.

Through the liberal arts education, my thoughts, attitudes, and beliefs have not changed dramatically. Gaining the background knowledge on the American culture through the course Racial Ethnic Gender Group Relations has helped prepare me for the different types of 'American' students in my classroom and the ideas that they may find valuable and important. I find that many of the ideas I am presented with are realistic ideas and not falsified ones. The ideas are good but do not alter my thoughts, attitudes,

or beliefs. I feel that I was a fairly well-rounded person when I first started attending college. I feel that I have gained more knowledge, but remained unchanged in personality.

The importance of broadening one's view of life to a global perspective is important when working with children. The students in one's classroom will use the educator as a role model and use the educator's ideas as their own. By broadening the view of one's global perspective, the teacher will be able to instill his or her thoughts into the minds of the students. This will be beneficial to the students and the community because the teacher can be positive about the world. He or she can present the information to the students without be prejudice, racist, or favoring one culture over another. This will allow the students to develop their own opinions of the world and will potentially decrease the hatred which begins in childhood.

Liberal arts is a key element in the future educators's education. The world is better understood by those who can view it through an unbiased opinion. Viewing the well-rounded person aspect of the education world will allow the teachers to use outside information to better education their students. Manchester college presents the opportunity to learn about the world within a neutral environment. This will help each and every future educator to be the best possible source of information for their future students as possible. The liberal arts will only give a better knowledge base and more potential knowledge to be used and shared with students. Manchester college prepares

tomorrow's teachers for more beneficial styles of learning, communication, and open a world of exploration up to the students through the teacher's knowledge.

Work Cited

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary. Merriam-Webster Incorporated. Springfield, Massachusetts. 2004.