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ESS 410 - Liberal Arts Paper

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A Reflection of Four Years

During my time at Manchester College, I have had the opportunity to participate and be a part of a diverse culture that broadens the viewpoints and knowledge of many individuals.

Deciding upon a liberal arts school and realizing the qualifications for graduation were on the higher end of the spectrum, my decision was still easy. I knew it would be more challenging to face classes that had nothing to do with what I was interested in. However, at the end of each semester my general education classes always provided me with something to be interested in.

The education of liberal arts at Manchester College has broadened my level of critical thinking, reflection, and understanding, not only within my content area, but in areas of culture, arts, humanities, natural sciences, and many different environments.

Liberal arts may seem to be a far fetched topic when it comes to exercise and sports science. However, it is not. Within this area of study, professionals deal with a variety of people on a daily basis. Many courses offered at Manchester have opened my eyes to the world of people, and how their viewpoints and interests may have been shaped. Race, ethnic, and gender group relations is a course that comes to mind when I think of the individuality of the human species, and how we as sports professionals need to familiarize ourselves these behaviors. Creating an perspective that is accepting and understanding of individuals is not the only important thing that liberal arts have to offer to those majoring in exercise and sports sciences.

The most significant and impacting part of a liberal arts schooling involves the individual attention and dedication it offers its students. As a student of Manchester College, I think I have received more one-on-one time with my professors or faculty within my major that I would not have received from any public school. The professors and staff show individual concern about the success of each of their students. This goes hand in hand with the aspect of small class sizes, which is very beneficial. Manchester College also provides the students with a large spectrum of opportunities to become involved in campus activities and gain experience within your choice of career. Overall, the opportunities that this liberal arts college has to offer is outstanding compared too many other schools.

Liberal arts involve and teach its students the diversity in cultures, races, individuals, countries, and many different aspects that are involved in this world. History of the Holocaust is a course I took during January term. This was one of the most influential classes I have taken throughout my college career in influencing my thoughts on the world. It never occurred to me the depth and severity of this tragic event, and how it still affects the lives of individuals today. It really set an emotion of thankfulness within me for all the opportunities I get the chance to partake in and the ease of my every day life. Ethical decision making is another general education course that opened my eyes to a plethora of ideas and thoughts. This education requirement showed me the aspects of different reasons people do things. It really made me put things into perspective and showed how past events and my surroundings feed into every decision I make as an individual. With these education courses, I have developed a broader sense of people and the ways we do things as individuals.

Volunteering and service learning experiences are the most significant part of my liberal arts experience. Like I mentioned before, Manchester College always provides multiple opportunities for students to get involved within the campus or community. Throughout the course, social work, I had the opportunity to partake in many activities. We went to Fort Wayne to shelters and centers for the poor. This experience provided an opportunity to see the result of an individual who's made poor life decisions or been impacted by family members or friends who have. It inspired me to do well in the world, and treat all of my students with the upmost respect because I never know what may be going on in their lives the moment they walk out of my gymnasium. Convocations are another opportunity Manchester allows its students to be involved and grow as an individual. Over my time at college, I have participated in a large amount of convocations and gained knowledge on new ideas and topics. These experiences have enhanced my time at a liberal arts school. During the class, general biology, we were provided with the learning experience of visiting local farms to see the impact of being "green." It was very informative in allowing us to visually see the impact that our culture has on the world, and just how destructive we have been. It made me appreciate our world and what it has to offer us. Not only has Manchester College's general education provided me with many volunteer opportunities or service learning projects, but my major courses have as well. One thing this college excels at is creating experiences and opportunities for each individual student to grow and gain knowledge with hands on experience. These experiences are truly the most important aspect of each major.

Compared to when I was a freshman, my skills in critical thinking and reflecting have expanded a tremendous amount. One class that pushed me to my limits and made me think more critical than I ever had was Sociology. With so many theories and such deep content, it really

made my mind stretch to a new degree. This class impacted me as a teacher dramatically by showing me the struggle of common folk in this society. It has made me aware that every child I interact with comes from a different background and behaves in specific ways due to this. Reflecting is a skill that is used substantially within my major because without reflecting and reviewing, I would not be able to grow to my potential as a teacher. Human communications is a course that made me reflect quite a bit. Being nervous to speak publicly, I always made sure I reflected on each speech so that I never would make the same mistake again. Not only have these liberal arts course created to mode of thinking to reflect my skills at something, but to view specific events or topics reflectively. The Christian faith or first year colloquium (FYC) are two more classes that really made me think and pushed my mind to view things in ways I was not used to. Overall, many things have increased throughout my last four years and critical thinking and reflecting have been two of those skills.

If I had the opportunity to start my college career over, I would pick the same route. I did not necessarily come to Manchester College because it was a liberal arts school. However, over the years I have learned to value everything it had to offer me. It has made me a better person, in the fact that I understand and appreciate the world with a different point of view. Due to these general education requirements, I think I will be one step ahead of my competition when I graduate from Manchester College. It has benefitted me as a person and as a teacher. Surely over the years, as I begin and continue my career, I will place even more of a value on what Manchester College taught me over my four years.

