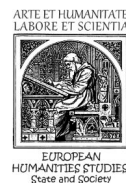


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Liberal Arts as Broad Integrative Learning in the Usa Undergraduate Education

Topicality. The foundations for general knowledge are laid in the Liberal Arts Education and should be acquired to a higher level so that graduates can participate in work, life, and citizenship both at home and in the world. The “Liberal Arts” is a traditional name in the USA higher school curriculum embracing natural sciences, sociocultural courses, and humanities taught by all the undergraduate students in the course of the first two years of their undergraduate study irrespective of their professional choice. In general, the Liberal Arts provide a context for the students’ further specialized studies. Integrative learning in the sphere of the Liberal Arts should involve students in the practices of core fields ranging from the sciences to the humanities and the arts on the basis of developing global, cultural, and democratic perspectives.

Contents of the Liberal Arts Education have always been aimed, in the course of the whole history of American higher school, at fulfilling intrinsic human needs in freedom, free choice of their views on the world, and self-actualization. The latter entails discovering the world of their personality and learning to manage it.

Different aspects of implementing the Liberal Arts Education and strategies for its reforming are highlighted by such American scholars as: A. Astin, E. Boyer, R. Clewett, J. Gaff, A. Leskes, C. Lopez, R. Newton, J. Ratcliff, C. Schneider, V. Smith, and others.

The objectives of the article are to consider the peculiarities of implementing the Liberal Arts Education as a basis for undergraduate study in the USA higher school.

Main part. Nowadays, it is recognized that there is a number of capacities of the Liberal Arts Education that not only contribute to personal success but also to the success of the society and the organizations within it. It should be observed that the Liberal Arts Education facilitates linkages by stressing the development of competencies rather than content knowledge. The Program in Liberal Arts (General Education) in Temple University provides opportunities for students to engage in:

Critical Thinking includes the evaluation of evidence, analysis and synthesis of multiple sources, and reflection on varied perspectives. Critical thinking generates a well-developed investigation that incorporates supporting and countering claims.

Contextualized Learning is based on understanding and integrating historical, contemporary, and cultural phenomena and their underlying principles in two broad applications. First, students recognize the interaction of complex forces that give rise to specific phenomena. Second, students understand and analyze related events, artifacts, practices and concepts across geographic, chronological and cultural boundaries.

Interdisciplinary Thinking presupposes understanding and applying knowledge in and across disciplines. Interdisciplinary thinkers apply multiple perspectives, paradigms, and frameworks to problems, topics, or issues.

Communication Skills help to communicate effectively orally and in writing. Students who communicate effectively use spoken and written language to construct a message that demonstrates the communicator has established clear goals and has considered her or his audience. Effective messages are organized and presented in a style appropriate to the context.

Scientific & Quantitative Reasoning. Students who exercise quantitative and scientific reasoning use and apply these reasoning processes to explain phenomena in the context of everyday life. Quantitative reasoning includes statistical and/or logical problem-solving, the relationships between quantities, and the use and misuse of quantitative data. Scientific reasoning introduces students to the evolution and interdependence of

science and technology and includes problem identification, hypothesis evaluation, and experimentation, interpretation of results and the use and misuse of scientific data.

Civic Engagement. As a special case of applied learning, it is an integral part of Liberal Arts Education. Meanwhile, preparing students for responsible democratic citizenship is a widely acknowledged purpose of the USA higher school. Civic engagement encompasses the integration of knowledge as well as intellectual skills acquired in the curriculum through different classroom strategies and various forms of out-of-classroom learning which promote developing civic insight, competence and prepare students to be effective citizens in a diverse democracy and the global community.

Information Literacy entails a broad spectrum of abilities, including the ability to recognize and articulate information needs; to locate, critically evaluate, and organize information for a specific purpose; and to recognize and reflect on the ethical use of information.

Lifelong Learning promotes a lasting curiosity through readings, discussions, activities, and classes of Liberal Arts [Temple University].

The Liberal Arts Education program attempts to foster the development of such skills through its curriculum by providing students with multiple opportunities to exercise, in multiple contexts and settings, their communication, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills [5].

The noteworthy experience at Wesleyan is worth considering. It involves ten essential capabilities which were selected by the faculty as representing the goals of the Liberal Arts Education. By gaining strength in these capabilities, students will be better equipped for the various social, intellectual, and ethical challenges that they will encounter in their lives. The ten capabilities are as following:

Writing (this skill implies the ability to reflect on the writing process and to choose a style, tone, and method of argumentation appropriate to the intended audience).

Speaking (this skill involves the ability to articulate and advocate for ideas, to listen, to express in words the nature and import of artistic works, and to participate effectively in public forums, choosing the level of discourse appropriate to the occasion).

Interpretation (the ability to understand, evaluate, and contextualize meaningful forms, including written texts, objects, practices, performances, and sites. This includes (but is not limited to) qualitative responses to subjects, whether in language or in a non-verbal artistic or scientific

medium).

Quantitative Reasoning (it embraces skills such as making reliable measurements, using statistical reasoning, modeling empirical data, formulating mathematical descriptions and theories, and using mathematical techniques to explain data and predict outcomes).

Logical Reasoning (this skill involves extracting or extending knowledge on the basis of existing knowledge through deductive inference and inductive reasoning).

Designing, Creating, and Realizing (this skill can be demonstrated through scientific experimentation to realize a research endeavor, a theater or dance production, or creation of works such as a painting, a film, or a musical composition).

Ethical Reasoning (it is the ability to identify, assess, and develop ethical arguments from a variety of ethical positions).

Intercultural Literacy (it is the ability to understand diverse cultural formations in relation to their wider historical and social contexts and environments. It also implies the ability to understand and respect another point of view. Study of a language not one's own, contemporary or classical, is central to this skill).

Information Literacy (it is the ability to locate, evaluate, and effectively use various sources of information for a specific purpose. It also involves the ability to judge the relevance and reliability of information sources as well as to present a line of investigation in an appropriate format).

Effective Citizenship (it is the ability to analyze and develop informed opinions on the political and social life of one's local community, one's country, and the global community, and to engage in constructive action if appropriate) [1].

On the grounds of the mentioned above we can infer that liberally educated students are intellectually curious, self-actualizing with the capacity for attaining personal growth and spiritual well-being. They value the rights and singularity of other individuals, the richness of diverse cultures, the need for community, and the common well-being. As lifelong learners and citizens, the liberally educated students are actively engaged with the world in all of its complexity, diversity, and dynamism.

In the broadest sense, as a result of the Liberal Arts Education, students become intentional learners (intentionality refers to an alignment of action with desired aims) – self-aware about the reasons for their studies, adaptable to new environments using knowledge, able to integrate knowledge from different sources as well as connect seemingly

various experiences and continue learning throughout their lives. “More specifically, to thrive in a complex world intentional learners are: *empowered* through the mastery of intellectual and practical skills; *informed* by knowledge about and forms of inquiry from the natural and social worlds; *responsible* for their personal actions and for civic values” [2].

American scholars argue the Liberal Arts Education focuses on four major outcomes:

- *“integrative learning* (the ability to connect knowledge across fields, experiences and levels) is a central characteristic of the intentional learner;
- *inquiry learning* (the ability to formulate and answer complex questions) is a vital tool of the empowered learner;
- *global learning* (the ability to understand and interrelate among the world’s communities) is a resource for the informed learner; and
- *civic learning* (the ability to understand and participate in decisions that shape and influence a diverse democratic society) is a fundamental foundation for the responsible learner” [3, p. 2].

The basic principle of the Liberal Arts Education is founded on personal development rather than preparing students for a particular professional activity. If we turn back to the Greek roots of this institution, we can see that its main purpose was to educate citizens as active participants in a democratic society. These days it should be much broader – to prepare students for different activities in a dynamic social environment. Supporters of the Liberal Arts Education believe that critical thinking, creativity and the ability to express their thoughts are of great value to life than the depth of knowledge in one subject. These qualities are of great importance because they allow students to develop as well as adapt to constantly changing socio-economic conditions after many years after graduation.

A mention should be made on the three models of the Liberal Arts Education in the USA higher school which are discussed by R. Newton: the Great Books Model, the Scholarly Discipline Model, and the Effective Citizen Model [4].

Through *the Great Books Model* students become familiar with classic works and grapple with the issues of human existence. It strives to provide a context within which students confront fundamental questions of life the perennial questions of humanity. These questions are introduced through in-depth historical review of the works of thinkers whose ideas changed human history. “Emphasis in the Great Books Model is on the

breadth of student learning while avoiding premature concentration on one discipline. Students are allowed to immerse themselves in specialized learning only after they possess the broader context provided by an integrated general education curriculum" [4, p. 170].

"The Scholarly Discipline Model proposes that general education should be basically an introduction to the disciplines that comprise and give shape to the college. The scholarly disciplines are the storehouses of human knowledge and the ways which humanity has developed over the centuries to understand the world. The emphasis of the Scholarly Discipline Model is based on a number of discrete disciplines. Through the model in question the students, with a solid grounding in the fundamental concepts and scholarly methods of the individual disciplines, can reflectively make their own connections by themselves" [4, p. 172]. Thus, the students emerge from the general education program with thorough knowledge of the most important Liberal Arts courses.

"The Effective Citizen Model is based on preparation of students for today's world, and even more for tomorrow's, which demands that the curriculum reflect the multicultural reality of American and global society. This model promotes the attitudes and values needed to address societal problems in the areas mentioned" [4, p. 174].

The implementation of any particular Liberal Arts Education program is of mixed character, which presupposes the elements of the three models being selected in idiosyncratic ways. The Liberal Arts, providing knowledge about the world, the ability to train the mind through any subject of study in terms of the unity of a person and the world. This trend is based on the principle of universal higher education humanization, which updates its social and cultural perspectives.

In general, the Liberal Arts curriculum is that vital component of undergraduate education which provides the comprehensive context for more specialized study in the major as well as further professional activity. The Liberal Arts courses, in their turn, are designed to prepare students for challenges in different spheres of modern society.

It should be also observed that the Liberal Arts Education is based on the principles of humanism and creates favorable conditions for a more complete manifestation of students' abilities in different forms of activities organized in accordance with their values and interests. It is aimed at their self-expression and self-realization.

Conclusion. The Liberal Arts Education helps students become adaptive, creative, and develops the capacity to identify and apply

various cultural, political, and technological perspectives. This education represents the kind of intellectual students' activity which promotes the development of their inner world, shaping their views on the world and value-normative foundations of their life. The capacities, the intellectual skills, and the knowledge students develop through the Liberal Arts Education provide the students with mental agility needed in an increasingly complex world and prepare them for work, life, and responsible citizenship. It is really useful training that yields a comprehension of general principles with a thorough grounding of the world perception.

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Abstracts

СВІТЛАНА ФЕДОРЕНКО. Вільні мистецтва як сфера інтегрованого навчання у післядипломній освіті США. У статті висвітлено особливості запровадження загальної гуманітарної підготовки студентів бакалавріату в закладах вищої освіти США. Розглянуто загальну гуманітарну освіту як цілісний процес особистісного розвитку студентів та підґрунтя для їхнього професійного становлення. Окреслено ключові цілі гуманітарної підготовки бакалаврів. Охарактеризовано три основні моделі реалізації змісту гуманітарної складової вищої освіти в США, а саме: модель, що ґрунтується на вивченні найкращих зразків класичної літератури різних культур; модель, що базується на певному комплексі навчальних дисциплін; модель, що спрямована на формування активної громадянської позиції.

Ключові слова: бакалавріат, вища освіта США, гуманітарна освіта, інтегративне навчання.

SWIŁANA FEDORENKO. Sztuki wyzwolone jako sfera edukacji zintegrowanej w kształceniu podyplomowym w USA. W artykule opisano szczególne cechy ogólnego przygotowania humanistycznego studentów studiów licencjackich na uczelniach w USA. Przedstawiono ogólne przygotowanie humanistyczne jako całościowy proces rozwoju osobistego studentów oraz jako podstawa do ich rozwoju zawodowego. Określono główne cele przygotowania humanistycznego licencjatów. Scharakteryzowano trzy podstawowe modele realizacji kształcenia humanistycznego na studiach wyższych w USA.

Słowa kluczowe: studia licencjackie, kształcenie wyższe w USA, edukacja humanistyczna, integracyjne nauczanie.

СВЕТЛАНА ФЕДОРЕНКО. Свободные искусства как сфера интегрированного обучения в последипломном образовании США. В статье освещены особенности внедрения общей гуманитарной подготовки студентов бакалавриата в высших учебных заведениях США. Рассмотрено общее гуманитарное образование как целостный процесс личностного развития студентов и как основа для их профессионального становления. Определены ключевые цели гуманитарной подготовки бакалавров. Охарактеризованы три основные модели реализации содержания гуманитарной составляющей высшего образования в США, а именно: модель, основанная на изу-

чении лучших образцов классической литературы разных культур; модель, базирующаяся на определенном комплексе учебных дисциплин; модель, направленная на формирование активной гражданской позиции.

Ключевые слова: бакалавриат, высшее образование США, гуманитарное образование, интегративное обучение.

SVITLANA FEDORENKO. **Liberal arts as broad integrative learning in the USA undergraduate education.** *The article deals with the features of the implementation of the liberal arts education of undergraduate students at higher school in the USA. We consider the liberal arts education to be a holistic process of personal development of students and as a basis for their professional development. Core objectives of liberal arts undergraduate education are identified. The three models of implementation of the liberal arts program in the undergraduate study in the USA are highlighted: the great books model, the scholarly discipline model, and the effective citizen model.*

Key words: undergraduate study, USA higher education, liberal arts education, integrative learning.