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Richard Heinberg

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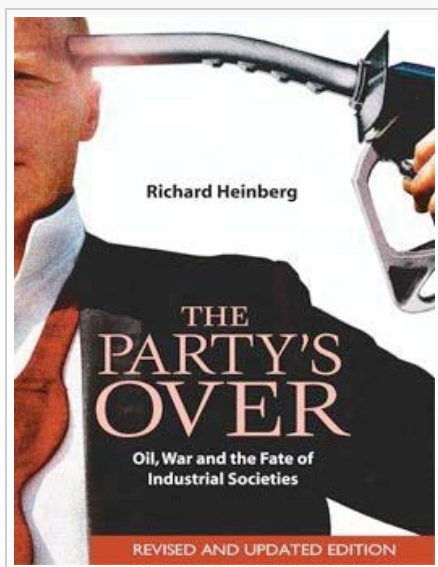
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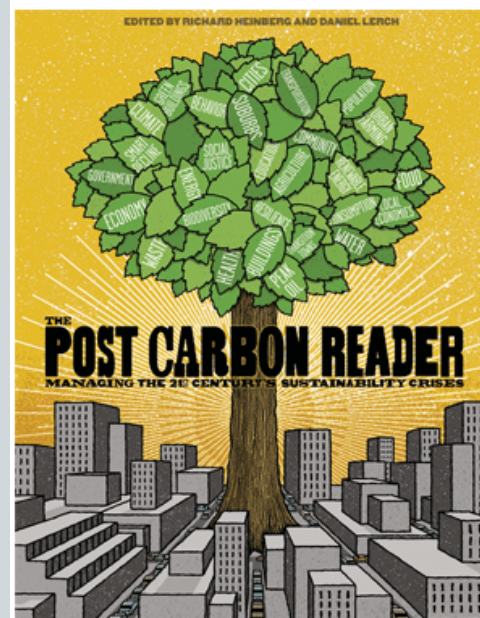
The world is about to run out of cheap oil and change dramatically. Within the next few years, global production will peak. Thereafter, even if industrial societies begin to switch to alternative energy sources, they will have less net energy each year to do all the work essential to the survival of complex societies. We are entering a new era, as different from the industrial era as the latter was from medieval times.

In "The Party's Over," Richard Heinberg places this momentous transition in historical context, showing how industrialism arose from the harnessing of fossil fuels, how competition to control access to oil shaped the geopolitics of the twentieth century and how contention for dwindling energy resources in the twenty-first century will lead to resource wars in the Middle East, Central Asia and South America. He describes the likely impacts of oil depletion and all of the energy alternatives. Predicting chaos unless the United States-the world's foremost oil consumer-is willing to join with other countries to implement a global program of resource conservation and sharing, he also recommends a "managed collapse" that might make way for a slower-paced, low-energy, sustainable society in the future.

More readable than other accounts of this issue, with fuller discussion of the context, social implications and recommendations for personal, community, national and global action, Heinberg's updated book is a riveting wake-up call for human-kind as the oil era winds down, and a critical tool for understanding and influencing current US foreign policy.



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"In this compelling book, Richard Heinberg gives us the tools – the information and understanding – to act. This is a wise and important book."

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LANE WALLACE - Lane Wallace is an author, pilot and entrepreneur who has written several books for NASA. She won a 2006 Telly Award for her work on the documentary, *Breaking the Chain*. [More](#)

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Liberal Arts and the Bottom Line

JUL 14 2010, 11:10 AM ET | [Comment](#)

The popularity of the late economist Milton Friedman's philosophy among business people has never surprised me much. After all, telling business people that "the business of business is business" is rather like telling people that eating dessert is actually good for you. It tells your audience what they want to believe, and relieves their guilt feelings about doing what they want to do anyway. No need to worry about pesky issues like employee welfare, environmental impact (unless required), or improving the social fabric of the community. No need to weigh the intangible costs to others of moving a business overseas, closing a factory for a quick profit, or paving roads through the Amazon to extract and export the oil.

By concentrating on the bottom line as the almighty measure of success, Friedman's philosophy also tends to focus employees on numbers as a measure of their own success. That focus, of course, encourages employees to work harder to increase those numbers. Which, in turn--surprise, surprise!--improves the company's bottom line even more. It's an incredibly convenient system that offers the appeal of neat and clean boundaries, and maximum profit for the company. Really ... what's not to like?

What's not to like, of course, is an uneasy feeling that sets in, periodically, that perhaps the world isn't as neat as Friedman's economic model suggests. That by focusing exclusively on their own bottom lines, businesses can do extraordinary harm. (See: recent economic meltdown and the BP oil disaster in the Gulf of Mexico.)

As a result of some of those recent disasters, as well as increasingly complex global markets and a growing belief that today's business executives need what investment icon Charlie Munger calls a "lattice-work of frameworks" to solve the growing number of "wicked" problems confronting them, a movement has begun to change what business students learn. At undergraduate and graduate business schools across the country--including Wharton, Harvard, Stanford, Yale and a host of other big names--curricula are being changed to include a greater focus on multi-disciplinary approaches, ethics, critical and integrative thinking, and even, in some cases, history and literature. (I [wrote](#) about this trend for the *New York Times* last winter.)

Roger Martin, the dean of the Rotman School of Management at the University of Toronto, has said openly that he's trying to create the first "liberal arts MBA." And when I asked David Garvin, a professor at the Harvard Business School and co-author of the recently published *Re-thinking the MBA: Business Education at a Crossroads* what he thought about that, he answered, "Is business education becoming more like the liberal arts? If the question is, 'are we trying to teach more about how to be a well-rounded human being who happens to be practicing business,' the answer is absolutely, 'yes.'"

On one level, these changes are an effort to assuage society's concerns about bloodthirsty and uncaring business executives bringing down economies or risking the destruction of an entire coastline in the name of profit. But on another level, they reflect a growing belief that the kind of complex, critical thinking and ability to look at problems in larger contexts and from multiple points of view that a liberal arts education

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instills (at least in theory) actually leads to better decision-making skills in business executives.

It's a viewpoint I actually endorse. Quite enthusiastically, as a matter of fact. But I recently came across a bit of history (in a *New York Times* [article](#)) that offered a bit of a cautionary tale on this front--at least in terms of businesses buying into the goal of making managers more well-rounded human beings.

In 1952, the president of Bell Telephone of Pennsylvania apparently became concerned that his managers, most of whom had purely technical backgrounds, did not have the broader knowledge they required to make superior business decisions. "A well-trained man knows how to answer questions," the Bell executives were reported as reasoning. "But a well-educated man knows what questions are worth asking."

Bell paired up with the University of Pennsylvania to offer a 10-month immersion course in the Humanities and Liberal Arts for up-and-coming Bell managers. The managers studied history and architecture. They read classics like James Joyce's *Ulysses* and poetry by Ezra Pound. They toured art museums and attended orchestral concerts. They argued philosophy from multiple points of view.

At the end of the 10 months, the managers were reading far more than they had before--if, in fact (as the article's author pointed out), they'd even *read* before. They were far more curious about the world around them. And in the polarized world of the early 1950s, at the height of McCarthyism, the Bell managers now "tended to see more than one side to any given argument." As hoped, they were far more equipped to make better and more thoughtful decisions, and to figure out what questions were worth asking.

By all appearances, the program was a rousing success, as well as a ringing endorsement of the benefits of a liberal arts education. There was, however, an unexpected twist in the program's impact on the Bell managers. After learning about how much more there was in life than business, one of the questions they apparently decided was worth asking was, "why am I working so darn hard?" As the article put it, "while executives came out of the program more confident and more intellectually engaged, they were also less interested in putting the company's bottom line ahead of their commitments to their families and communities."

Within a few years, Bell had discontinued the program.

It's an interesting and--when you think about it--completely reasonable outcome. Aside from developing the ability to think critically and approach subjects from multiple perspectives and disciplines, the idea of a liberal arts education is to develop--as Professor Gavin said--a more well-rounded person. And being a workaholic is antithetical to a well-rounded person's psyche.

The current movement to make business students "more well rounded human beings who happen to practice business" will almost assuredly create managers who think more about long-term consequences, impact on external audiences, being a good global citizen, and balancing the numbers with more intangible metrics of success. They may also be far more agile and creative thinkers who find successful middle ground between entrenched or polarized camps, generate more innovative solutions to sticky problems, and devise ingenious ways to responsibly benefit both their companies and the communities they serve.

But these more well-rounded managers may also go home earlier, or choose options--for themselves or for their companies---that put some other value above maximizing profit for the company or its shareholders. Like Adam and Eve discovered, a little knowledge can be a very dangerous thing.

The question will be, somewhere down the line, what businesses or shareholders think of all that. For all the lip service we pay to wanting more well-rounded managers and responsible corporations, are we prepared to back that when it's our own income, stock or profit that's affected by those more balanced and responsible decisions? Or will we gravitate once more to Friedman's far less conflicted philosophy that--whatever else can be said about it--conveniently aligns the numbers-oriented thinking and motivation of managers with the best interests of their employers?

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Multicultural Critical Theory. At B-School?

By LANE WALLACE Published: January 9, 2010

A DECADE ago, Roger Martin, the new dean of the Rotman School of Management at the University of Toronto, had an epiphany. The leadership at his son's elementary school had asked him to meet with its retiring principal to figure out how it could replicate her success.

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Steve Payne for The New York Times

Roger Martin of the Rotman School of Management is transforming the business curriculum.

He discovered that the principal thrived by thinking through clashing priorities and potential options, rather than hewing to any pre-planned strategy — the same approach taken by the managing partner of a successful international law firm in town.

"The 'Eureka' moment was when I could draw a data point between a hotshot, investment bank-oriented star lawyer and an elementary school principal," Mr. Martin recalls. "I thought: 'Holy smokes. In completely different situations, these people are thinking in very similar ways, and there may be something special about this pattern of thinking.'"

That insight led Mr. Martin to begin advocating what was then a radical idea in business education: that students needed to learn how to think critically and creatively every bit as much as they needed to learn finance or accounting. More specifically, they needed to learn how to approach problems from many perspectives and to combine various approaches to find innovative solutions.

In 1999, few others in the business-school world shared Mr. Martin's view. But a decade and a seismic economic downturn later, things have changed. "I think there's a feeling that people need to sharpen their thinking skills, whether it's questioning assumptions, or looking at problems from multiple points of view," says David A.

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Peter DaSilva for The New York Times
At Stanford, the Hasso Plattner Institute of Design, or d.school, helps business students learn to think creatively.

Garvin, a [Harvard Business School](#) professor who is co-author with Srikant M. Datar and Patrick G. Cullen of an upcoming book, "Rethinking the M.B.A.: Business Education at a Crossroads."

Learning how to think critically — how to imaginatively frame questions and consider multiple perspectives — has

historically been associated with a liberal arts education, not a business school curriculum, so this change represents something of a tectonic shift for business school leaders. Mr. Martin even describes his goal as a kind of "liberal arts M.B.A."

"The liberal arts desire," he says, is to produce "holistic thinkers who think broadly and make these important moral decisions. I have the same goal."

Ever since 1959, when two influential studies by the [Ford](#) and [Carnegie Foundations](#) chastised business schools as being too vocational, most M.B.A. programs have taken anything but a broad approach to their subject matter.

With few exceptions, traditional instruction has involved separate disciplines like finance, marketing and strategy, with an emphasis on quantifiable analyses and methods. While some valued what a liberal arts background could provide, the dominant view was that those elements had no place in professional business schools.

BUT even before the financial upheaval last year, business executives operating in a fast-changing, global market were beginning to realize the value of managers who could think more nimbly across multiple frameworks, cultures and disciplines. The financial crisis underscored those concerns — at business schools and in the business world itself.

As a result, a number of prominent business schools have re-evaluated and, in some cases, redesigned their M.B.A. programs in the last few years. And while few talk explicitly about taking a liberal arts approach to business, many of the changes are moving business schools into territory more traditionally associated with the liberal arts: multidisciplinary approaches, an understanding of global and historical context and perspectives, a greater focus on leadership and social responsibility and, yes, learning how to think critically.

Two years ago, for example, the [Graduate School of Business](#) at Stanford made a sweeping curriculum change that included more emphasis on multidisciplinary perspectives and understanding of cultural contexts. The first-quarter mandatory curriculum, for example, now includes a class called "The Global Context of Management and Strategic Leadership." First-year students also must take a course called "Critical and Analytical Thinking."

"If I'm going to really launch you on a career or path where you can make a big impact in the world," explains the school's dean, Garth Saloner, "you have to be able to think critically and analytically about the big problems in the world."

A version of this article appeared in print on January 10, 2010, on page BU1 of the New York edition.

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Why a Liberal Arts education can best prepare business leaders

Posted: March 17, 2010, 4:57 PM by Ray Williams
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By Ray B. Williams



The recent economic downturn, Wall Street debacle and string of ethical and moral scandals surrounding a number of prominent business leaders has led some observers to question the value and focus of business education programs. The importance of a Liberal Education is once again gaining some attention.

In my article for the Vancouver Board of Trade, publication, *Sounding Board*, I said that few MBA programs or executive training programs adequately address the crux of developing leaders. For the most part these programs are theory-oriented in nature, and use the traditional tools of conceptual learning--case studies, lectures, films and discussions--relying on the contrast between what managers do and what leaders do. The problem with many business school leadership programs is that they teach ideas, not real life behaviors, and business school professors are chosen by virtue of their ability to publish detailed research, not having had leadership experience themselves. Understanding something intellectually often has little to do with being able to do it. Adult learners need experiences and coaching to turn concepts into leadership capabilities.

A **New York Times** article entitled, *Is It Time To Retrain B-Schools?* has had a massive response. Kelly Holland, the author of the article says among other things, "Critics of business education have many complaints. Some say the schools have become too scientific, too detached from real-world issues. Others say students are taught to come up with hasty solutions to complicated problems. Another group contends that schools give students a limited and distorted view of their role - that they graduate with a focus on maximizing shareholder value and only a limited understanding of ethical and social considerations essential to business leadership. Such shortcomings may have left business school graduates inadequately prepared to make the decisions that, taken together, might have helped mitigate the financial crisis, critics say."

In an article in the London Times, entitled *Harvard's Masters of the Apocalypse*, Philip Broughton, a Harvard Business School graduate and author of *What They Teach You At Harvard*, says, "If Robespierre were to ascend from hell and seek out today's guillotine fodder, he might start with a list of those with three incriminating initials beside their names: MBA. The Masters of Business Administration, that swollen class of jargon-spewing, value-destroying financiers and consultants have done more than any other group of people to create the economic misery we find ourselves in...You can draw up a list of the greatest entrepreneurs of recent history, from Larry Page and Sergey Brin of Google and Bill Gates of Microsoft, to Michael Dell, Richard Branson, Lak-shmi Mittal - and there's not an MBA between them. Yet the MBA industry continues to grow, and business schools provide vital income to academic institutions: 500,000 people around the world now graduate each year with an MBA, 150,000 of those in the United States, creating their own management class within global business. From Royal Bank of Scotland to Merrill Lynch, from HBOS to Leh-man Brothers, the Masters of Disaster have their fingerprints on

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every recent financial fiasco."

Henry Mintzberg, a professor of management studies at McGill University in Montreal, also argues that because students spend so much time developing quick responses to packaged versions of business problems, they do not learn enough about real-world experiences. Rakesh Khurana, a professor at Harvard Business School and author of **"From Higher Aims to Hired Hands,"** a historical analysis of business education, says that business schools never really taught their students that, like doctors and lawyers, they were part of a profession. And in the 1970s, he said, the idea took hold that a company's stock price was the primary barometer of success, which changed the schools' concept of proper management techniques. Instead of being viewed as long-term economic stewards. He says that managers came to be seen as mainly as the agents of the owners - the shareholders - and responsible for maximizing shareholder wealth. He goes on to say that "we can't rely on the usual structure of MBA education, which divides the management world into the discrete business functions of marketing, finance, accounting, and so on."

Warren Bennis and James O'Toole have written how business schools have been on the wrong track for years, claiming among other things that "MBA programs face intense criticism for failing to impart useful skills, failing to prepare leaders, failing to instill norms of ethical behavior." Rakesh Khurana and Nitin Nohria wrote that schools of management will fail to produce consistently principled, decent leaders until management itself becomes a profession, like medicine or the law.

For universities, business education is a kind of cash cow. Business schools are less expensive to operate than graduate schools with elaborate labs and research facilities, and alumni tend to be generous with donations. Business education is big business, too. Some 146,000 graduate degrees in business were awarded in the U.S. in 2005-06, roughly one-fourth of the 594,000 graduate degrees awarded that school year, according to the U.S. Education Department. Still, there have been signs that all is not well in business education. A study of cheating among graduate students, published in 2006 in the journal Academy of Management Learning & Education, found that 56 percent of all M.B.A. students cheated regularly - more than in any other discipline. The authors attributed that to "perceived peer behavior" - in other words, students believed everyone else was doing it.

Some employers are also questioning the value of an M.B.A. degree. A research project that two Harvard professors released in 2008 found that employers valued graduates' ability to think through complex business problems, but that something was still lacking. "There is a need to broaden from the analytical focus of M.B.A. programs for more emphasis on skills and a sense of purpose and identity," said David A. Garvin, a professor of business administration and one of the project's authors. Indeed, students themselves may welcome an emphasis on character skills. In surveys that the Aspen Institute regularly conducts, M.B.A. candidates say they actually become less confident during their time in business school that they will be able to resolve ethical quandaries in the workplace.

The solution to the problem of business school programs in preparing leaders and managers may lie in returning to the concept of a Liberal Education.

The term "Liberal Education" was first used in classical Greek and Roman times, chosen to emphasize the fact that it helped people deal with their rulers critically. Through time, a liberal education was thought to help a person become wise.

Does a broad, idealistic, liberating education also prepare a person to be valuable to a company? Many business leaders argue that it does. The workplace has changed. Workers no longer stay in one company doing the same job until retirement and most young Generation Y workers today are not reticent to question authority.

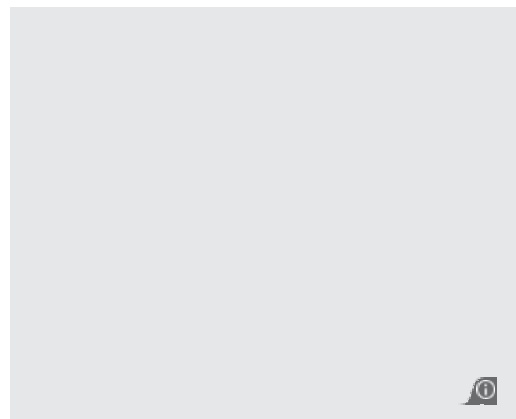
Thomas Hurka, in a short essay entitled, "How To Get To The Top: Study Philosophy," says, "we may do best of all if we educate managers in philosophy. Although technical skills are most important in low-level managerial jobs, they become less so in middle and top jobs."

Management guru Henry Mintzberg, argues that business skills cannot be

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taught in classroom, saying that a degree in philosophy or history would be more beneficial. William Sullivan from The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, and author of his forthcoming book, **Preparing for Business, Learning from Life: Liberal Arts and Undergraduate Business Education**, argues that the separation of business courses which focus on narrow technical study and the broader Liberal Arts approach no longer serves business students, and that an integrated program that focuses on engagement of the real world from a practical, personal and moral perspective, is needed. Thomas Friedman, in his best selling book, **The World is Flat**, argues that because the world and cultures are so interconnected today, business leaders must gain more knowledge from the Liberal Arts.

In an article by David Creelman for **Works Magazine**, on the Liberal Arts and business, he cites the perspective of Arie de Geus, CEO of Royal Dutch/Shell, in his book, **The Living Company**, that his greatest insights came from his study of philosophy and psychology, not business.

The Conference Board of Canada created an essential skills profile for new graduates which mirror a Liberal Arts curriculum. In particular, the ability to see and think in systems, ask powerful inquiries, act and think independently, see the bigger picture and deal effectively with complexity, ambiguity and contradictions are hallmarks of Liberal Arts studies which are essential for business leaders.

The Liberal Arts rarely appear in the normal curriculum of the leading business schools in North America, although some business schools such as the Aspen Institute, draw upon humanities literature. David Garvin, Svikant Divar and Patrick Cullen, authors of **Rethinking the MBA: Business Education At The Crossroads**, argue that the economic recession has brought into clear view that business leaders had to sharpen their thinking skills and obtain broader perspectives than many business schools provide. With few exceptions, most business schools focus on instruction in separate disciplines such as finance, marketing and strategy, with an emphasis on quantifiable methods and analysis.

Lane Wallace in his article in the **New York Times**, January 11, 2010, says that even before the recent financial upheaval, business executives, operating in fast-changing, global markets were beginning to realize the value of managers who can think more nimbly across multiple frameworks, cultures and disciplines. A number of prominent business schools, notably the Rotman School of Business in Toronto, and Stanford Business School, have redesigned their MBA programs integrating Liberal Arts and a multi-disciplinary approach.

Senior executive hiring trends also show the value of Liberal Arts training. A significant number of successful CEOs and other senior executives such as Carly Fiorina (Hewlett-Packard), Michael Eisner (Disney), Alan Lafley (Procter and Gamble), Steve Case (America Online), Meg Whitman (Ebay) and Steve Forbes (Forbes Inc.), have come from a Liberal Arts education rather than a traditional business school.

So it seems that the recent economic downturn and criticism of traditional business schools curriculum have placed the question of what should business leaders learn? A question that the Liberal Arts may be the answer. My best advice to prospective business leaders--study philosophy!

Ray B. Williams is Co-Founder of **Success University** and President of **Ray Williams Associates**, companies located in Phoenix and Vancouver, providing leadership training, personal growth and executive coaching services.

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Education Master Plan
Information Submission Form

The Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District is starting a year-long process to develop an Educational Master Plan that will serve as the blueprint for our future. The Educational Master Plan is a long-range, comprehensive document intended to guide institutional and program development at both the college and district levels. The priorities established in the Educational Master Plan will serve to guide College and District decisions about growth, development and resources allocation.

As the first step in this planning process, everyone in the GCCCD community (faculty, staff, students and community members) are invited to identify and submit information sources to be reviewed for the trend analysis in one of six areas – society, technology, economy, environment, politics, and education. We are not asking you to do research, only to identify information you already have or that you encounter during the search period (March 21- April 25) and bring it to our attention for review.

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'Making a World that is Worth Living In' Humanities teaching and the formation of practical reasoning

Melanie Walker¹

Author Affiliations

Abstract

This article considers humanities teaching as a vital space where students might develop their capability as 'practical reasoners'. The importance of this for self-development, but also for society and democratic life, is considered, while the economic purposes which currently dominate higher education are critiqued. An example is taken from the teaching of history to show how lecturers teach and students learn secular intellectual practices under pedagogical arrangements of communicative reasoning and ontological becoming.

capabilities democratic life history education practical reasoning teaching and learning

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