

MAC EWAN

Interested in a Career
in Communications?

Information Session March 18, 6:30 pm

Design Studies • Journalism • Professional Writing

Grant MacEwan College
Centre for the Arts and Communications
Room 436, 10045 - 156 Street

say it School of Communications
780.497.4340

www.MacEwan.ca/soc

We shouldn't limit our knowledge

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a corporate or institutional environment working on that one thing. If they choose psychology, they can take options in the sciences, learn other languages, and study finance, but god forbid if they ever decided to know more about these things at an advanced level.

Education has become all about the ends. We're prohibited from wanting to learn for the sake of learning itself. The irony is that we tend to think this is best for us as individuals—particularly in terms of earning money—though all it does is make for one-dimensional individuals and, worse, one-dimensional and essentially narrow scholarship and work.

When filling out an application on an online scholarship engine that would match me with awards, I was asked to select, from a comprehensive list, the academic areas I was interested in. However, when I did this and tried to go on to the next step, the system wouldn't allow me, as I had filled in "too many." Apparently, the magic number is ten.

The application seemed to confirm what everyone else has been asking me: why do you continue taking degree after degree? Why not choose one thing and one thing only, then move on to the next step? I'm now on my third and fourth degrees, but even after degrees in psychology, sociology with a specialization in criminology, philosophy, and classics, I'm still not satisfied.

There's more to learn—so much more. Now I contemplate a new double degree which will allow me to study English literature and art history, but even after that, I don't think I will be sated. I've always been interested in the law, so perhaps I'll go for a Juris Doctoris. I've also loved all things medieval since I was a child and have a fascination with psychiatry, so I see no reason why I shouldn't pursue studies in those fields either.

I've started avoiding new people simply because when I answer the inevitable question as to what exactly I do, they laugh upon discovering that I'm on my third and fourth degree. The assumptions that they make, I have no doubt, are that I'm lazy, don't want to work, or else have a terrible academic record and hence have no chance in the "real world." But none of these are true.

The problem is that students are expected to spend as little time in school as possible focusing on one thing—and then spend their lives in

One argument I often encounter when I present my reasons for wanting to learn much yet still give back to society as much as I can is that I can't be a valuable contributor if I'm a "jack of all trades and master of none." Yet I feel this is because the way education as an institution has been constructed and designed: it's not a claim that reflects human capacity. If a child growing up can easily pick up seven languages simply by being exposed to them, clearly this means that the child is capable of knowing a lot. So why do we narrow ourselves so much and value the fact that we know so little? We shouldn't stunt this innate ability; we shouldn't look down on those who are genuinely interested in knowing something and working on it and who have the energy and patience to spend their lives learning and picking up as much knowledge as possible.

Taking their GPA and IQ as equal, a student who spends three years in undergrad studying the classical civilizations, completing a PhD focusing solely on Roman religious behavior, and thereafter devoting his life to this area is not better than another who knows not only this, but also chemistry, biology, and Socrates.

We have the mental capacity to do all this—and our lives are certainly long enough to allow it—and not only are we contributing to society, but we're also bettering ourselves and gaining wisdom and knowledge. This is the highest good of all, and it's the human prerogative.

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