

## Senior Example Demonstrating Strong Vertical Integration

*Explain New Information*

*Explore Preconceptions*

*Analyze the Issue*

*Synthesize Implications*

When I came to Bridgewater as a freshman, I was not entirely sure of what a liberal arts education was. However, now that I have spent going on four years at a liberal arts college, I have formed an idea of the ultimate goal. This idea may be another lump in the bottom of my stocking waiting to be examined, but I agree with John Agresto when he says in his article “The Public Value of the Liberal Arts:”

“The liberal arts are the method by which we hope to discover the truth about the most important matters of human life through reason and reflection. By ‘most important matters’ I mean everything from what is justice, why am I here, what do I owe others, what do I owe myself, to how might I live an admirable life, through what makes some things beautiful, to how do the heavens work, and what can we know about nature?”

The liberal arts are a way of looking at, examining, and reflecting upon the world in which we live. Many questions are posed in a liberal arts education, but not all the answers determined. But the process of discovery is almost more beneficial than coming up with an answer. It is this process of exploration and reflection that I have enjoyed the most while at college.

But more than this, I have done what I always longed to do in high school, to think, act, reflect and come to conclusions for myself. This intellectual liberty will remain with me as I move beyond college into a much larger arena than the campus mall. But the intellectual growth that I have achieved here can only continue to increase as I am confronted with new questions, as my beliefs are challenged, and as I continue my quest for knowledge outside of the classroom.

## Senior Example Demonstrating Strong Horizontal Integration

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The most important thing that Bridgewater has taught me is how to think. While I was at Hollywood Christian, I was taught how to obey and not question, that if the textbook made a reference to God, then it must be right. I have appreciated the professors I have had here who encouraged students to disagree with them and develop a strong argument for their beliefs. Perhaps the best example of my change of heart came while I was taking *New Testament* with Dr. Watson. I was somewhat taken aback when Dr. Watson began talking about the Bible as a story book, a collection of stories that were subject to the writer's interpretation of a story passed to him by word of mouth. As the course progressed, I began to gain a much deeper understanding of the values and principles that I had been exposed to during high school. I came to the realization that these values and principles have been hijacked by many in their attempts to gain power and influence over others. It is now my opinion that organized religion has become concerned with offerings, attendance and the way you should *not* live instead of promoting personal exploration of spirituality, tolerance, and the way you *should* live, all of which are explicitly stated in Scripture.

This realization came through my *History* classes which taught me about the abuses of power of the church and my *Sociology* classes enlightened me about the human drive for power and status in society. Once I was able to make connections between historical events and perceptions on human nature I began to view my own spirituality in a different light. I realized that it is not important to view the Bible as a literal dialogue of God, but to take Scripture in context of the time it was written and apply it to your life today. It is more important to have faith in something greater than yourself and to be accountable to a higher power than it is to strictly adhere to the man made dogma of religion.