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## Образование по модели liberal arts and sciences в российской высшей школе: понятие, форматы, преимущества и ограничения

Несмотря на споры о ценности и актуальности образования по модели liberal arts and sciences (LAS) для современной высшей школы, особенно отчетливо звучащие в американской литературе, оно играет все более заметную роль в продвижении всестороннего образования, воплощенного в ориентированном на учащихся подходе к преподаванию и обучению.

Определяемое как обеспечение широкой, междисциплинарной основы с последующей специализацией, образование по модели LAS также развивает такие навыки 21 века, как критическое мышление, решение проблем, эффективные коммуникации и т.п., тем самым позволяя студентам адаптироваться к постоянно изменяющимся обстоятельствам и готовя их отвечать вызовам будущего.

Цели исследования: изучить аргументы как обосновывающие пользу образования по модели LAS, так и демонстрирующие его неоднозначность и сложность его реализации (в т.ч. в российских реалиях). Также исследуются форматы LAS. Для достижения данных целей авторы используют методы сравнительного анализа и систематизации, а также диалектический, историко-культурологический и социально-философский подходы.

Результатами исследования стали выявление эпистемологических, экономических, социогуманистических, педагогических и методических аргументов в пользу LAS, а также установление практических и философско-образовательных аргументов, говорящих о парадоксальности, сложности и неоднозначности LAS. Систематизация и демонстрация диалектической связи данных аргументов (преимуществ и ограничений LAS) составляет научную новизну нашего эссе.

В заключении авторы обосновывают необходимость перехода российских университетов к модели LAS ради повышения их конкурентоспособности. Определяется, что наиболее оптимальным для российских условий форматом LAS является формат «ядерной программы».

**Ключевые слова:** бакалавриат, ядерная программа, система распределенных требований, гуманитарный колледж, свободное образование, философия образования, философия перенниализма, открытый учебный план

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## A liberal arts and sciences education at the Russian higher school: concept, formats, benefits and limitations

Although there has been a lot of skepticism about its value and relevance for modern higher education, especially widespread among American educators, liberal arts and sciences (LAS) education is playing a prominent role in promotion of a well-rounded education providing a student-centered teaching and learning environment.

Providing a broad interdisciplinary grounding and further specialization, LAS education also develops such 21st century skills as critical thinking, problem solving, effective communication, etc., thus preparing students to respond ever-changing environments and to meet challenges of the future.

The purpose of the study: Analyze the arguments supporting the utility of LAS education as well as those uncovering challenges and difficulties of its implementation (including Russian-specific reality). The study also explores different LAS formats. The authors have used methods of comparative analysis and systematization, dialectical, historical and culturological, social and philosophical approaches.

The study helped reveal epistemological, economic, socio-humanistic, pedagogical and methodological arguments for LAS as well as identify practical, philosophical and educational arguments suggesting LAS paradoxicality, complexity and ambiguity. The systematization and demonstration of the dialectical relationship of the above arguments (benefits and limitations of LAS) constitute scientific novelty of our study.

In conclusion, the authors give reasons to prove that Russian universities should adopt the LAS model to improve their competitiveness. The core-curriculum format is selected as the best one for the Russian conditions.

**Keywords:** baccalaureate, core curriculum, distribution requirements, liberal arts colleges, liberal education, philosophy of education, philosophy of educational perennialism, open curriculum

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## Introduction

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In present-day Russian education, bachelor's degree programs still tend to hinge on the educational pipeline model with its fixed set and sequence of courses strictly guided by federal educational standards and university curricula. This model proved to be effective in the Soviet system of education designed to prepare students for fixed jobs, the number of which was known in advance in the planned economy. But the establishment of the economy ushered in by the Fourth Industrial Revolution, globalization and digitalization imposes new requirements on higher education.

Today, universities must prepare students for a rapidly changing social and economic environment. The liberal arts and sciences (LAS) model is offered as an alternative to the educational pipeline that lost its former reliability. The LAS model helps students build their individual educational trajectories (IETs) that can be adjusted and changed during the learning process. On January 15, 2020, during his address to the Federal Assembly, President of Russia Vladimir Putin offered to give an opportunity to second-year graduates to choose a new education program, including allied professions. This refers to the '2+2+2' system of education. Students will be able to change the field of their study not only after earning their bachelor's degree, but also upon the completion of their 2nd year. This system has been used by leading universities in Europe, the United States, China and Japan.

Some Russian universities have also adopted some of its elements. Previously, universities adopted the system by their own decision; at present, some of them are given a free hand at the legislative level [8]. Among the first major LAS projects implemented in Russia was Smolney College (The Faculty of Liberal Arts and Sciences) of St. Petersburg State University, which was opened jointly with Bard College (USA) in 1999 and offers a multidisciplinary bachelor's degree program. The Institute of Social Sciences (Liberal Arts College) was opened at the Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration in 2009. The LAS launching at the Ural Federal University is on the agenda.

The objectives of LAS implementation in Russia: To overcome the crisis of disciplinary specialization, to increase the labor market demand for college graduates, to facilitate the development of students' civic consciousness [18], and to improve student retention rates at Russian universities.

The LAS model traces back to the ancient Greek and Roman tradition of artes liberales and was promoted at European medieval universities; later, it was revived in the Humboldtian model of higher education. Its goals resonate with Confucian, Hindu and ancient Islamic values [3], though it gained especially wide popularity in the United States. Yet, in modern times, LAS education has to fight for support and legitimacy, first of all, in the United States. The paradoxicality of the existing situation cannot be left unnoticed: While interest in LAS education is increasing both in Russia and worldwide, its criticism is growing in the USA where it is accused of elitism, high costs, and impracticality [5; 20].

The growth of LAS is often explained by the following factors: "(a) the current and future economy needs workers who are broadly educated and adaptable; (b) the complexity of global problems is such that schools (and nations) must educate thinkers who can engage beyond narrow areas of expertise; (c) the consequences of modernity oblige higher education to address ethical, individual and social responsibility as well as to offer knowledge and skills (so-called 21st century skills); and (d) students should be given choices about their future



direction, and not be forced into often unsuitable vocations or professions at too young an age” [7].

M. van der Wende conceptualizes three overlapping arguments in favor of this approach to undergraduate education in the 21st century: epistemological, economic and social/moral.

1. Epistemological argument: “It relates to the development of knowledge and the fact that the most exciting science is happening at the interface of the traditional disciplines. Some of the ‘big challenges’ both in science and society are just not solvable by single-discipline approaches. This has led to a substantial focus on crossdisciplinary or interdisciplinary research into themes such as climate change, energy, health and well-being” [31, p. 4].

2. Economic argument: A society based on a knowledge economy, innovation, and global competition requires indispensable skills of the 21st century, which will help students grow into creatively and critically thinking professionals who are digitally literate and competent in effective cooperation and communication, etc.

3. Social/moral (socio-humanistic) argument: “This underlines the importance of educating the whole person, including personal and intellectual development with a view to social responsibility and democratic citizenship.” [31, p. 4].

These arguments are interrelated, but as shall be discussed in more detail below, tensions may arise between the economic and the social/moral arguments.

Apart from its benefits, LAS education has certain disadvantages and limitations, which will be further analyzed in our article. This is the purpose of our research.

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## Materials and methods

The study relies on the summary, systematization and critical analysis of Russian and foreign publications, Skolkovo experts’ (A. Govorov [14], A. Shcherbenok [28]) reports as well as historical and regulatory documents addressing LAS conceptualization in education. The study focuses on complexity, paradoxicality and ambiguity of LAS development in historical perspective and in the modern learning environment. Our essay is a theoretical interdisciplinary study, thus calling for an integration of cultural, philosophical, pedagogical and social approaches and methods.

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## Results

### **1. Concept**

The concept of Artes liberales (also known as liberal education frequently used to replace the more general term ‘liberal arts and science education’) stemmed from the Greek and Roman idea suggesting that freeborn and full-fledged citizens should have certain skills to take part in public debates, serve in court and perform military service. The development of essential skills was based on five senses (sight, hearing, taste, touch and smell) and was performed through three arts (trivium – grammar, rhetoric and dialectic) and four sciences (disciplinae) (quadrivium – geometry, arithmetic, music and astronomy) [32, p. 152].

The above division remained effective at medieval universities, though underwent some changes: The disciplines included in the seven liberal arts were regarded as propaedeutic to theology, law and medicine [22, pp. 1027-1052].



During the Renaissance, the term 'liberal arts' lost its dominant role. It was replaced with such generic terms as *studia humanitatis* and *studia humaniora* covering humanitarian subjects (philosophy, history, rhetoric and poetry) seen as a launching pad for development of an individual's spiritual nature. During the Enlightenment, at European universities, the function of liberal arts as the knowledge essential for intellectual and spiritual virtues passed either to philosophy or to literature. The re-conception was institutionally entrenched by the project of Wilhelm von Humboldt's university [13] and by Cardinal Newman's reforms. This explains why arguments put forward by advocates of the liberal arts tradition are frequently borrowed from works of W. Humboldt or J. H. Newman [4; 32].

Thus, we can state that the present-day term 'liberal arts' (LA) incorporates the meanings articulated in ancient times and correlates with the Renaissance term '*studia humanitatis*' as well as with the provisions specified in the project of Humboldt's university.

In real life, the LA concept was consistently implemented at American liberal arts colleges rather than at European universities, even though according to Tocqueville Americans "will habitually prefer the useful to the beautiful, and they will require that the beautiful should be useful" [27, p. 48]. But if the liberal arts colleges initially followed the position of The Yale Report of 1828: "Professional studies are deliberately excluded from the course of instruction at college to leave room for those literary and scientific acquisitions that, if not commenced there, will in most cases never be made. They will not grow up spontaneously, amid the bustle of business" [26, p. 7], then today, "the curriculum of liberal arts colleges which used to be relatively homogenous has become increasingly diverse as each college attempts to find a way to combine the objective of educating 'wise citizens' with a more vocational curriculum" [15, p. 1054].

We see a departure from the original understanding of liberal arts, the object of which, according to the Yale Report, "is not to teach that which is peculiar to any one of the professions but to lay the foundation that is common to them all" [26, p. 7].

As result, the LA concept tends to become increasingly problematic and obscure. The term is losing the distinctness of its boundaries. The variability of LA interpretation and its implementation raise questions about the unambiguity of the definition and actual nature of this phenomenon.

As noted by Y. Ivanova and P. Sokolov: "The concept of liberal arts in education belongs to the phenomena, the media effect of which is directly proportional to the ambiguity of the content: When discussed both by its advocates and opponents, this educational innovation ranges in scale from a 'Copernican Revolution' in education to a conservative reformation, i.e. bringing back well-forgotten models of elite education (Tsarskoe Selo Lyceum, Ivy League universities, etc.)" [18, p. 72].

This suggests that what makes education 'liberal' is not limited to individual elements (subjects, curricula, vocations); it is something more substantial and invariable. What is it? This is the fact LA has been interpreted and institutionalized in different ways, and yet, throughout its history the main idea of LA has always been essential: the idea of connecting love of learning and social usefulness [9].

Thus, the idea of LA is timeless, though its content and experience (expressed via philosophy, curriculum, pedagogy, administration and learning context) are different in interpretations of each school.

Not to get drowned in multiple approaches to LAS, we will stick to the definitions given by Jonathan Becker, a leading expert in this field, a consultant and supervisor of LAS in Russia. "Modern liberal arts and sciences education is a system of higher education



designed to foster in students the desire and capacity to learn, think critically and openly, and communicate proficiently, and to prepare them to function as engaged citizens. To achieve this goal, a flexible curriculum is applied that demands breadth as well as depth of study, encourages interdisciplinarity, and enables student choice. It is realized through a student-centered pedagogy that is interactive and requires students to engage directly with texts within and outside of the classroom” [6, p. 36].

Jonathan Becker explicitly uses the term ‘LAS’ education as opposed to ‘liberal’ education. While the two notions share similar goals and are often used interchangeably, in his opinion, ‘LAS’ education as a system is a more comprehensive package [6, p. 37]. He uses the term ‘liberal arts and sciences’ intentionally: while in recent times ‘liberal arts’ curricula are most often associated with literature and the humanities, natural sciences and mathematics historically have formed part of the LAS curriculum and are critically linked to some of the most important challenges facing citizens today, be they related to disease, nutrition, or the environment [6, p. 38].

## ***2. Characteristics and benefits of LAS:***

As noted by such educational experts as A. Kudrin [19], N. S. Avdonina [4], Y. Ivanova & P. Sokolov [18] and J. Becker [6], the LAS educational model has a number of characteristics, which can also be seen as its benefits:

- departure from early vocational specialization;
- students’ individual educational trajectory offering a choice of courses and types of classes;
- interdisciplinarity of curricula;
- development of both General cultural and professional competencies;
- ‘horizontal relations’ between students and teachers at the University;
- lack of a lecturer's monopoly on knowledge: Lecturers adopt the role of facilitators of learning rather than knowledge creators and disseminators;
- intensive tutoring;
- academic mobility of teachers and students [24];
- diversity of student experience (students from different countries, stratum, etc. are in the same classroom);
- individualization through different sequence of studied subjects; adaptive courses; choice of teachers; choice of themes (projects); flexible student teams rather than fixed class-groups [14];
- ‘intimate’ learning environments (small classrooms, small class sizes);
- interactive teaching techniques [17; 29];
- students’ active involvement in classroom sessions;
- abundant self-study with focus on reading, reflective essay writing, and creative assignments;
- teacher feedback and peer review of creative projects and homework;
- most of the learning process takes place outside the classroom;
- students’ participation in building their own curriculum to gain experience of group responsibility;
- encouragement of students’ initiative both in learning and in social (non-academic) life;
- preparing students for life in multicultural or cosmopolitan society;



- implementing a model of continuing education, or lifelong learning;
- conception of ‘The Great Conversation’ (by R. M. Hutchins [16]): conversation between different epochs;
- the main function – bridging the two-cultures divide identified by C. P. Snow (between humanities and sciences) [25];
- the modern version of LAS is designed to overcome the dichotomy between field-specific vocational training in STEM education and universal cultural training.

### 3. LAS formats

There are 3 formats of LAS:

1) The **Open curriculum** (Brown University) implies that students do not have any restrictions on choosing subjects they want to study at university. To earn a bachelor’s degree, a student must complete the required number of credits for 32 academic courses (during 4 years). Thus, the student makes his own decision on his educational trajectory (tutors can help him, but they cannot force him into making a choice). The right to choose any (even the most unexpected) combination of subjects helps develop diverse competencies of graduates: from multi-skilled specialists to field-specific experts [28].

2) The **Core curriculum** is implemented in programs of such famous higher education schools as the University of Chicago, Columbia University, the California Institute of Technology (Caltech) and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). In the Russian Federation, the core curriculum is adopted by Tyumen State University (TSU), the Russian Academy of National Economy and Public Administration (RANEPA), the National Research University of Information Technologies, Mechanics and Optics (ITMO) and others. Thus, we can see that core curricula are implemented not only at classical, but also at technological universities.

The format of the core curriculum is opposite the open curriculum format. It is represented by space of basic disciplines that an undergraduate student must study according to the approved curriculum designed by the university and compulsory for all students, regardless of their major. Upon the completion of the core program, students can continue their education in their major and may choose additional subjects unrelated to their major (Minors), and/or elective courses (Electives) at their discretion and according to their aptitudes.

There are two versions of the core curriculum design:

2a) the rigorous design or the hard core (Columbia University, TSU) implies a fixed number of categories: humanities, social sciences, arts, natural sciences, etc.: A set of courses in them is compulsory and cannot be changed;

2b) the flexible design or the soft core (the University of Chicago, Caltech, MIT) means that students may choose courses within the category, though they cannot change the number of categories and their profile.

It should be noted that in the first case (2a) the number of courses within the category is very limited and frequently can be represented by only one course. In the second case (2b) the set of courses is characterized by greater diversity, though it involves more challenges when implemented in real life [28].

3) The extremes of these two formats – absence of any restrictions in the open curriculum and choice minimization in the core curriculum – are somewhat offset in the third format adopted by most of the American universities. This refers to the **Distribution requirements** system where students may choose among a range of courses within the particular fields



of learning, though they are not granted unlimited freedom in choosing their educational trajectory. We will discuss this system, using the example of the world's leading, top-ranked Harvard University [14].

Harvard's undergraduate program is common to all areas of specialization, which are offered at Harvard (from humanities scholars – philosophers and linguists – to engineers, builders, architects, etc.).

A Harvard undergraduate must complete 32 four-credit courses over 4 years. Although students may choose between letter-graded or pass/fail options, they must take 21 letter-graded courses (including two letter-graded Language Requirement courses). Such freedom of choice is important for students, as they scrupulously trace their scores that affect their overall performance and, consequently, their position in the overall ranking. Therefore, if a student does not feel confident about any subject, he can choose a pass/fail option not to hurt his grade-point average and not to go down in the overall ranking. Note that 12 out of 21 letter-graded courses must be completed till the end of the second academic year.

Another important feature should be pointed out: It is recommended that general education courses should be completed during the first two years at university, though no one can forbid postponing them until the fourth year. There is one exception: Harvard believes that students should know how to write proper scientific texts; therefore, the Expository Writing Requirement course, unlike the other courses, is time-bound (1st semester).

Undoubtedly, such natural limitation as space availability must be taken in consideration. On the other hand, if a student fails to complete the required 32 courses over 4 years, he may extend his education for another year for additional charge.

At Harvard, only 12–14 out of 32 courses directly deal with an area of specialization or concentration (Concentration = Major); however, contrary to the concerns (and resentment expressed by Russian students) regarding the insufficiency of two-year training for a fully-fledged professional, Harvard convincingly demonstrates that 1/3 of the specialization program is sufficient to train a highly competitive specialist.

In Russian reality, the open curriculum format is most controversial. This format is dangerous for Shoppers (by T. Dekker) – students who are radically uncertain about the courses they want to study and, therefore, they intend to try out all of them. It is ideal for motivated students with clear interest in their future profession (the type of Tailors, according to Teun Dekker's classification [for 14]) or for students who want to be masters of many disciplines or homo universalis (Renaissance people, according to T. Dekker). In the meantime, it was the shortage of such students (Tailors and Renaissance people) that made it necessary to revise the educational model.

The second and third LAS formats may be most realistic for the Russian environment. The system of distribution requirements is believed to produce a well-rounded specialist boasting a unique combination of competencies and high competitiveness on the labor market. At the same time, this system involves certain risks that students who lack motivation to study and who came to university to get only a diploma or to avoid\postpone the draft (a hot topic for Russian young people), or to use it as moratorium (to postpone identity achievement or adulthood, which is more typical of Western young people) will make their choice guided by non-standard reasons (easy-to-study programs, undemanding teachers, etc.). This format encourages students classified as Avoiders by Dekker.

Thus, the LAS format best suited for Russian universities is the core curriculum format that required minimum adaptation to regional specific conditions. It also neutralizes Avoiders and Shoppers, while encouraging Tailors and Renaissance people. The existing



general education course can be revised and remodeled into the 'core' of the curriculum. The problem is that the idea of actual upgrading of education can be substituted with a bureaucratic formality: Rearrangement and renaming of curriculum elements.

*3a. Characteristics of the core curriculum format:*

- Core curricula do not imply freedom of choice. In a way, core curricula are built on compulsion, as they tend to make students become broadly educated people, even though student may not want it. "It is sometimes thought that a student ought not to be urged to the study of that for which he has no taste or capacity. But how is he to know whether he has a taste or capacity for a science before he has even entered upon its elementary truths?" [26, p. 9].
- Students cannot choose exclusively among 'easy' (or seemingly easy) courses, as they could do if they studied at university having an open curriculum or a distribution requirements system.
- Only source texts are allowed, including the so-called 'slow reading' technique to improve protection against 'the bad professor', as the author of a classical text is perceived as a full-fledged partner in conversation.

*3b. Problems associated with core curricula:*

- The crisis of the Western canon. The idea of core curricula is built on the philosophy of educational perennialism, which implies certain 'Great Books' having everlasting pertinence to all (highly doubtful) people. The question is what texts should be included in the canon, thus directly involving the structure of the core curriculum. Core course programs are criticized for their Eurocentrism and elitism – characteristics related to perennialism.
- Problematization of the integral vision of the world. Perennialism assumes that there is a certain integral vision of the world [11], which should be instilled into students. However, considering realities of the 21st century, the idea is supported by no means all.
- The problem associated with increasing complexity of subjects and shortage of time for their proper learning.

*3c. Opportunities and prospects of core curricula:*

- Existence of an interdisciplinary dialogue. The interdisciplinary nature of courses included in core curricula protects them against the extremes typical of standard Russian synoptic courses when the trees cannot be seen for the wood as well as against the extremes typical of excessively narrow and detailed courses of the distribution requirements system, when the wood cannot be seen for the trees<sup>1</sup>.
- Systematic and universal education: Students are introduced to multiple sciences rather than one field of study, though they may see it as most important (as it is closely related to their future profession). Students tend to change their attitude towards comprehensive subjects, which initially can be perceived as secondary and non-mandatory. As a result, further specialization is chosen more consciously.
- The core curriculum is well integrated into any forms of education: traditional, online and mixed. The core curriculum facilitates the implementation of hybrid learning:

<sup>1</sup> It is believed that if a person understands, for example, Plato's philosophy, then he will be able to work with ideas of other philosophers.



For example, students can listen to the online course of a famous Russian or foreign expert (including massive open online courses (MOOCs)) and then discuss it during university seminars conducted by their teacher. This method can help eliminate the main drawback of online education – absence of live contact and communication. In addition, it can extend educational horizons beyond the bounds of Alma Mater.

#### **4. LAS limitations**

The discussed arguments for LAS (including its core curriculum format) should be thoroughly analyzed from the perspective of practical, philosophical and educational applicability of LAS in the Russian environment.

First, let's look into practical aspects:

We share the opinion of many other scholars and think that one of the most critical problems that may arise during LAS launching is associated with strict requirements imposed by the Federal Educational Standard (FES) specifying the set of competencies mandatory for students: If students are allowed to choose subjects, they may not acquire the set of competencies required by the FES [14].

According to Y. Ivanova and P. Sokolov, freedom of choice in Russian environments is often perceived as an opportunity to get into a highly demanded and profitable profession 'through the back door' rather than an opportunity to become a renaissance person [18, p. 86], though this concern can be eliminated through competitive selection for popular courses: Not only a student has the right to choose, but also a teacher can make his choice based on the student's ranking, his admission tests, motivation letter or digital portfolio.

In Russian environments, LAS implementation is limited due to difficulties related to teachers' and students' mobility, which are mostly bureaucratic rather than intentional.

The relationship between massive and elite universities remains unresolved, as it involves the ever-present and self-contradictory intention of each university to have the largest possible number of students and still retain its 'elite' status [18, p. 89].

LAS education is exceptionally expensive. LAS programs are not scalable, and they cannot be diversified; this means that the number of duly qualified teachers should be increased. Economic returns of LAS are also questionable, considering graduates' prospects on the labor market [7]. Success stories of graduates of top-ranked (and expensive) LAS universities are often given as examples proving the effectiveness of the above model of education. However, the question is what exactly contributed to their success: The competencies gained at the university or contacts available to them due to their affiliation with the wealthy and privileged group of population?

Let's turn to philosophical and educational aspects:

The modern version of LAS frequently encourages criticism instead of the ability to feel surprised and to be inquisitive (important elements of former LAS best practices). Undoubtedly, phenomena cannot be studied in isolation, without social and political contexts – it is scholastic and useless; however, it makes no sense to criticize them before they are understood [15]. "In place of wonder, we are told that the new liberal arts are the home of 'criticism.' 'Critical thinking,' not discovery and delight, is its mantra. In place of wonder, then understanding, we now pride ourselves on our skepticism" [2, p. 399].

Another concern is that the passion for discussions about global problems of the humanity, when out of touch with the specific subject, can degenerate into dilettantism, populism and demagoguery [18, p. 85].



The next item applies mainly to American and European LAS versions, though it can also gain popularity in Russia (in criticism of the perennialism philosophy underlying the core curriculum format). While interests of oppressed people – women, colored population, sexual minorities, etc. – are being increasingly protected, the legacy of ‘dead white males’ is being consistently defamed. When works of humanities and arts are declared outcomes of oppressors’ rather than enlighteners’ activities, it is hardly surprising that students tend to disrespect these subjects.

But, “oddly enough, it was not simply high culture or elite and haughty studies that were rejected with the dismissal of Great Books and the study of Western Civilization, but the more ‘ordinary’ was fast rejected as well. In many places, what came under attack were standard beliefs and practices – ordinary religious and familial institutions, ordinary relations between the sexes, and ordinary sentiments of patriotism. It may have been this stigmatization of the ordinary, more than the attacks on the cultured and elite that turned most “ordinary” people, especially parents, against the new ‘liberal arts’” [2, p. 400, note 9].

Advocates of LAS see it as the way to overcome the dehumanization of education due to extensive training in humanities and arts [23]. They emphasize their epistemological and ethical significance for educational purposes after Auschwitz [1]: Consolidation of the social system of equality and freedom, in which genocide and industrialized cruelty are unprecedented. Yet, it was Auschwitz that proved non-existence of reverse correlation between cruelty and the level of education in humanities and arts: Mengele’s admiration of Beethoven’s music had nothing to do with testing of his human qualities and did not prevent him from treating his victims with creative and twisted cruelty [10]. As M. M. Rubinstein wrote justly: “Isolated, science and education turn into a light that can show the way to both a saint and a murderer” [quoted by 30, p. 149].

Thus, humanism is not limited to training in humanities and arts, but it functions as a counterbalance preventing the world’s turning into a commodity and a person into a means (in Kant’s interpretation).

But there is a paradox here too: On the one hand, we cannot deny the intrinsic connection between LAS and the humanistic domain interested in developing a person as a bearer of cultural, national, social knowledge and skills; a person who is responsible and capable of independent thinking and acting. On the other hand, LAS serves the purpose of setting education on the mercantilist track, which is captured by the respective vocabulary typical of the neoliberal ideologies of the labor market: competitiveness, quantifiability, demand among consumers, etc.

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## Discussion

Thus, discussing the above, we can point out that the transition to the LAS model is required to increase competitiveness of Russian universities. In this instance, we subscribe to the view A. Shcherbenok [28] that LAS is being questioned, when education is exhausted by it. As we found during the analysis, the core curriculum format is best suited for implementation in the Russian environment. Although there are epistemological, economic, social, cultural, and pedagogical arguments supporting this transition, we cannot neglect material, legal, organizational, and ideological factors preventing implementation of this model.



## Conclusion

Russian higher education must reach a consensus between the need for full development of the human personality and needs of the labor market, knowledge-driven economy and democracy as well as between the scientific and social progress. This requirement is expected to be satisfied after LAS is introduced into the Russian educational space. Based on the analyzed arguments supporting LAS and systematized by us practical, philosophical and educational limitations of LAS, we can conclude that the above consensus can be reached through LAS characteristics representing benefits of such education, though it can be hindered by divergent vectors splitting LAS between the tendency to neoliberal market ideologeme (person as a means) and humanism (person as an end-in-himself, as an absolute value), between 'to Have' and 'to Be' (by E. Fromm's theory [12]), between the money-code of value and the life-code of value (in J. McMurtry's terms [21]).

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