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‘Note too that a faithful study of the liberal arts
humanizes character and permits it not to be cruel’
(Ovid, *Epistulae ex Ponto*, II, ix, 47)

Experiences and challenges in curriculum development and implementation of a Liberal Arts degree in the UK context

The University of Warwick has recently launched its Strategy document which outlined its vision and priorities for the next 5 years. The first priority in our [2020 Strategy](#) is to deliver education that is life-changing and with a global perspective. The development of a Liberal Arts degree is cited as one of the goals towards promoting trans-disciplinary teaching and learning and encouraging “partnership and collaboration between academics and students”. The Liberal Arts degree, according to the Vision Statement, will allow students to be “active partners with staff in their education experience”; its principles will coincide with the university’s belief that “flexibility and choice” are crucial for enhancing the students’ experience, and with the university’s culture of promoting and valuing the importance of being “creative, analytical and critical in the questioning of ideas, the pursuit of knowledge and the exploration of new interests”.

In my role as Academic Director I have been tasked with the creation of a degree that: draws on the university’s existing strengths in research and teaching; creates new possibilities for trans-disciplinary education; offers students unique opportunities for developing their critical and creative skills; establishes links with European and American institutions; includes a significant element of professional experience.

My paper presents a case study of the various stages of exploring, developing, market-testing and implementing a Liberal Arts degree in the UK academic setting. I describe the challenges that we faced in engaging the academic community with the concept of Liberal Arts education and consider the strategies we used to address them; I examine some of the educational and cultural considerations that informed the structuring of the degree and explore the solutions we implemented; finally I suggest some ways in which our experience can be translated to other institutions that operate under different political and cultural constraints.

It is with great pleasure and anticipation that I look forward to attending the Global Dialogue on Liberal Arts & Science Education in Shanghai. I hope to make valuable connections with international colleagues and engage in constructive dialogue on the current state of Liberal Arts & Science education, while looking forward to seeing it adapted to / implemented in China.