

“How to Talk about the Value of the Humanities in the Age of the Corporate University”

Paul Jay
Purdue-Calumet University
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I want to begin with the big picture. In thinking about the problems we in the humanities face I believe it's important to start by recognizing that these problems aren't limited to the humanities. They're systemic in higher education, part of a larger set of problems that threaten colleges and universities everywhere. However, the fallout from these problems has hit the humanities disproportionately hard because we seem to be in a weaker position than the natural and social sciences to stake a claim for the centrality of the subjects we research and teach at a time when the traditional liberal arts model for measuring the value of a higher education has begun to shift to a corporate one. The corporatization of higher education represents not only a shift from shared governance to a top-down, bottom-line approach to governance in which faculty expertise in academic and curricular matters is increasingly ignored. It also reflects a dramatic shift toward seeing higher education as vocational training, an educational experience geared to credentialing, in which the value of courses and programs are defined narrowly in terms of their practical vocational utility.

It's not surprising that these developments have hit the humanities particularly hard, that our disciplines are so vulnerable in an age of shrinking budgets, the casualization of academic labor, and the increasing dominance of an educational ideal that puts a stress on computational, technological, and mechanical skills at the expense of a broad-based education in history, philosophy, and the arts. If the value of education is increasingly being measured by trustees and legislators too ready to replace a liberal arts model of higher education with a vocational training model of higher education, then it's no wonder the

humanities seem to be in crisis. If the very foundations of higher education are shifting, it may be that the humanities, perennially on less solid ground than the natural and social sciences, seem to be getting shaken the hardest.

This means that defending the integrity of the humanities requires defending the integrity of higher education itself. It means resisting the marginalizing of faculty voices in academic and curricular matters, resisting the institution of managerial structures at colleges and universities that lead to bloated bureaucracies and the over investment in non-curricular matters broadly related to “student life” at the expense of investing in more tenure-track faculty, more classrooms, and more support for a broad liberal arts education. However, it also means finding a way to articulate the value of a humanities education that stresses both our traditional commitment to the intangible rewards that come from studying philosophy, history, literature and the arts, and yet at the same time stresses what is new and innovative about the humanities in the 21st century, and the transferable skills they impart to students.

I don't think it will do to simply fall back on well worn, boiler-plate defenses of the humanities that characterize their value narrowly in terms of the inner journey they facilitate, or the big questions they pose – as a place where we can help our students to discover the meaning of life and to find themselves. I believe such defenses of the humanities by well-meaning humanists are too often elegiac (elejayac) – laments for the passing of what sometimes can seem like an overly narrow, idealized, or even sentimental vision of what the humanities may have been that simply feeds the idea they're a little quaint and outdated. Don't get me wrong. I have valued the humanities for the way in which they've nourished my own inner life – sometimes in ways wholly unexpected – and I want my students to experience this aspect of a humanities education as well. I embrace the idea that studying the humanities has a value for its own sake, and I'm deeply committed to the belief that the humanities

ought to be a place where our preoccupation with the practical and the utilitarian can be submitted to constructive critical scrutiny. But I also believe that in the 21st century we need to present a broader, more nuanced, innovative and forward-looking vision of the humanities, and that such a vision need not be seen as a betrayal of what we have always been doing.

This means presenting the humanities in a way that stresses not just the inner nourishment studying history, philosophy, literature and the arts can bring, but the reading, analytical, research, writing, and critical thinking skills humanities courses teach our students as well, skills that are manifestly transferable to a range of employment opportunities. It also means stressing the innovative, even transformative work that has unfolded in the humanities over the last thirty or forty years, work that has served to reshape our understanding of the human and to challenge our ideas about liberty, agency, responsibility, social justice, and the relationship between humans, technology, and the biosphere in which we all live. For example, I think we do a disservice to ourselves when, in explaining what we do in the humanities, or in defending their value, we play down (or sometimes disparage, or ignore altogether) the innovative role that theory has had in deepening, enriching, and challenging our understanding of the human, especially in the attention it has insisted we pay to the complex ways in which social and political power flows through cultural forms and shapes human subjectivity. The successive linguistic, historical, and cultural turns in the humanities that have defined its most innovative work since the mid-1970s – marked by the contributions poststructuralist theory, feminism, critical race and gender theory, and postcolonial studies have made to our understanding of the human – have in my view been overwhelmingly positive. From this point of view our challenge is not simply to defend the humanities, but to defend a new humanities, one in part defined by a critique of the very humanism that historically defined the humanities in the first place. It simply won't do to pretend that the last 30 or 40 years never happened.

This is a tall order. It means finding a balance between stressing the traditional value of a humanities education – and the importance of humanism to its various disciplines – while at the same time finding a way to explain what is new and innovative about the work we do, work which in its theoretical and methodological rigor, and in the critical pressures it puts on the traditional discourse of humanism, has remade the humanities in ways that might make them seem unrecognizable to the very constituencies we need to address in order to insure that the humanities have a future – students, their parents, administrators, trustees, legislators, and the broader public.

It also means finding a way to balance a simultaneous stress on tradition and innovation, transcending the blame game that often pits the two positions against one another. I was reminded of the difficulty we face in achieving such a balance last week when I came upon an article by Colleen Flaherty in *Inside Higher Ed* about a conference at St. John's College in Santa Fe, NM called “What Are the Humanities For?” Some of you may have seen it. The conference was aimed at facilitating a discussion much like the one we will have tonight. At a time when the humanities are threatened with defunding, it asked, how do advocates of the humanities respond? Do we, Flaherty writes, extol the “intrinsic virtues of the liberal arts” or do we “adopt the opposition’s rhetoric, making a case for their usefulness?” And more importantly, she added, “is that dichotomy even valid?” These are all good questions, but as the article points out, they're hardly new. “The liberal arts,” she writes – and quite accurately – “have long been subject to criticism and even ridicule from those who don't see their immediate” and practical “value.” Of course there are two arguments here, one about whether or not the humanities have any practical value, and the other about whether or not we ought to even ask the question of whether or not the humanities have any practical value. Of course the value of the humanities is precisely that they call attention to the problem with thinking in such dichotomies. They're able to help facilitate spirited and open-ended conversations about things like “value” that can't

be reduced to the narrowly utilitarian. But being able to have such conversations, being able to negotiate their intricacies, is itself a skill and so belies the very dichotomy the article reinforces when it states that the argument about the *usefulness* of education is an argument made by “opponents” of the humanities. Why should pointing out the utility of a humanities education be seen as selling out to opponents of the humanities? Why should we be embarrassed about making such an argument? I believe this way of thinking ends up being counter-productive because it falls into the either/or trap of setting tangible skills over-against intangible values, as if the two advantages of a humanities education aren't deeply intertwined.

So, how *do* we frame a defense of the humanities that avoids falling into this trap? I think one of the first things we need to do is to temper the rhetoric of crisis currently surrounding the humanities. I argue in my book that this rhetoric helps to feed the very crisis it seeks to correct. Do we in the humanities face a host of challenges? Of course we do, and it's important that we tackle them. Many of these challenges are perennial, which means they're structural – connected to the kinds of questions we ask, the issues we explore, and the methodologies we use – and so they aren't going to go away. Others, however, are connected to contemporary institutional and budgetary problems that urgently need addressing. But as I point out in the opening chapter of my book, a lot of the evidence used by critics claiming the humanities are in crisis, many of them humanists themselves who are openly skeptical about, or even hostile to new directions taken by humanities scholarship in the last 30 to 40 years, is distorted or simply wrong. In defending the humanities, we ought to begin by setting that record straight.

For example, many who claim the humanities are in crisis cite as evidence a steep fall off in humanities

enrollments, which many argue is the result of the humanities having turned their back on traditional subjects, writers, and texts in favor of theory, political correctness, and the teaching of non-canonical texts (a number of speakers at the Santa Fe conference recycled this old argument). However, there's little evidence to support this claim and we ought to say so. As many researchers have pointed out, these critics use 1970 – the historical high point of humanities majors – as the point from which they chart a decline. But as Ben Schmidt, who has crunched the numbers demonstrates, enrollments in the humanities have held steady between 1984 and 2010 at about 6.5%, with a few upticks between 1988 and 1996. Schmidt observes “that the overall pattern gives the lie to any arguments that claim the humanities are being eroded by things like ethnic studies or a departure from the classics. Students aren't any less interested in majoring in history or English now than they were at the moment deconstructionism hit American shores.” And while the number of English majors has fallen at some Ivy League institutions, according to Scott Saul writing recently in *The New York Times*, nationwide English majors have held steady at between 9.8 and 10.6 percent over last two decades. He notes that according to Humanities Indicators, a project of the American Academy of Arts & Sciences, the share of bachelor's degrees earned in the humanities has stayed remarkably steady between 1987 and 2010 (10% in 1987, and about 11% in 2010, with some brief fluctuations up during the overall period). Saul echoes Schmidt in pointing out that these statistics suggest that “we must straighten out one of the great misconceptions that has circulated around humanities professors: that we are a trendy lot, ‘tenured radicals’ wrenching the curriculum into irrelevance as we impose the latest theoretical paradigm upon it.” Critics who make that argument are engaging in ideological polemics – they simply don't like the intellectual orientation of much new work in the humanities. But they do not have any empirical data to back up their arguments. It's a simple fact that enrollment dips correlate with economic depressions, not with the rise of theory.

Another argument we need to rebut is the claim that humanities majors aren't qualified for jobs when they graduate and so have great difficulty finding employment compared to other, more “practical” majors. Here again the evidence doesn't quite bear out the claim – certainly not to the extent that it documents a “crisis” – especially when we consider students don't choose the humanities because they want to earn a lot of money. They choose the humanities because they're attracted to a life of the mind and to the ideal of finding ways to serve others. The most recent good news on this front came just last Friday in a study published by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences showing that median salaries (2012) for humanities graduates were \$51,000 compared to a median salary of \$56,000 for all workers with a bachelors degree. In my view that's not a huge difference, especially when you consider why students major in the humanities in the first place (the real scandal is in the gender differential, \$59,00 for men to \$45,000 for women). And humanities students who go on to earn advanced degree find their median salaries jumping up to \$71,000. These statistics bear out the ones I discussed in my book. There I noted that “according to the most recent survey of the college graduate labor market by the Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce . . . recent humanities and liberal arts majors had 9 percent unemployment” (in 2010–2011). That's pretty much right at the unemployment rate of 9.1% for students who majored in math and computer science, and below that of students who majored in the social sciences (10.3%). And it's really not that much higher than the average across all majors, which is 7.9 percent. This report also showed that immediately after graduation the 9.8 percent and 9.5 percent unemployment rates for English and History majors, respectively, were lower than those for economics majors (10.4 percent) and political science majors (11.1 percent). While it is true that students who major in health, business, education, the hard sciences, and engineering have lower unemployment rates and higher salaries, it's also the case that students who major in the humanities are probably less concerned with earning high salaries than are students majoring in these other fields. The important point here is that salary alone should not be the main factor in determining the value of a

particular field, but to the extent it is a factor these salary differentials aren't all that bad. They certainly don't document a "crisis."

I also argue in my book that we need to underscore the fact that employers continually express keen interest in hiring students with humanities degrees. We shouldn't be embarrassed about stressing the practical advantages humanities students have based on the skills they learn. Gerald Graff and I cited many examples of this in our article, "Fear of Being Useful," and I cite more in my book. For example, Edward R. Rust, CEO of State Farm Insurance observes that "at State Farm, our employment exam does not test applicants on their knowledge of finance or the insurance business, but it does require them to demonstrate critical thinking skills" and "the ability to read for information, to communicate and write effectively, and to have an understanding of global integration." Most hiring managers care more about a job candidate's communicative and critical thinking skills than they do about their majors. Narrow training in the STEM disciplines isn't enough. Indeed, there's a glut of STEM graduates who aren't finding work.

The advantages employers see in humanities graduates were underscored in a 2013 survey of business leaders conducted by The Association of American Colleges and Universities. Their report, titled "It Takes More than a Major: Employer Priorities for College Learning and Success," makes clear that employers are less interested in narrow knowledge in specific fields than they are in broad knowledge and transferable skills. The Association reported that 93 percent of employers felt that a capacity to think critically, communicate clearly, and solve complex problems is more important than a candidate's undergraduate major. Over 75 percent of those surveyed want job applicants schooled in critical thinking, complex problem solving, and written and oral communication. The employers surveyed

about their key priorities ranked “quantitative reasoning and knowledge about science and technology” at the very bottom, at 55 percent and 56 percent respectively, while humanities and liberal arts related skills ranked at the top. The study also revealed a broad interest among employers in graduates with a knowledge about “human diversity, and global cultures,” the ability to perform “evidence-based reasoning . . . including analysis, communication, critical and creative thinking,” a facility for “ethical reasoning, civic and democratic knowledge and engagement, global acumen . . . the capacity to work productively with diverse people and perspectives,” and, finally, the “ability to apply knowledge, skills, and responsibilities to complex problems and new settings.”

I'd like to stress again that I'm not arguing that the humanities don't face a host of problems, but I *am* arguing that the rhetoric of “crisis” in the humanities is a bit overblown, and that the more we buy into and perpetuate that rhetoric, the more distracted we get from mounting an effective and forward-looking defense of their value. I believe we ought to be aggressive in countering that rhetoric with the evidence I've just cited. Enrollments are fairly steady, our students are finding jobs, and employers are eager to hire them. We ought to get that message across, and we shouldn't be worried that it is somehow a capitulation to the enemy. It isn't. It ought to be part of a balanced approach to defending the humanities against the idea they've become irrelevant – of no use to students who only care about jobs and the bottom line. They care about a lot more than that. Given all of the positive evidence I just cited, I think we need to stress that the humanities don't *just* insure that students read Plato and Shakespeare while developing a breadth of cultural literacy related to historical events, philosophical thinking, and artistic expression. They do, and this is of crucial value. But humanities courses also teach students tangible skills transferable to a marketplace that's eager for employees who have them, and that's important to stress too.

Part of the argument here, of course, is that a humanities education is not just about the past. It's about the present and the future as well. I think that if you ask most people (including many academic administrators) what the humanities are about they'll give you some kind of historical answer – that the humanities are about the study of the best that's been thought and said in literature, philosophy, theology, and history – with the aim of identifying timeless truths that transcend the limits of their own historical moment. This shouldn't seem all that surprising since the humanities have their roots in humanism, which most people probably think of as having to do first with the recovery, and then the dissemination and systematic study of classical texts and what many now think of as canonical works written from the Renaissance well into the 19th century. From this point of view the humanities have a largely curatorial responsibility. This classically conservationist approach to the humanities has been articulated most clearly by Andrew Delbanco. According to Delbanco, the humanities went astray in the 1970s and 80s when criticism began to overwhelm curation, when theory and the critique of humanism took the place of the humanities' responsibility to preserve and venerate a traditional body of knowledge (and the seemingly timeless authority it had). What this point of view misses, of course, is the *reciprocal* relationship between curation and criticism, for to a significant degree the act of curation requires criticism, and criticism is itself a form of curation. After all, a curator doesn't just make decisions about what to feature based on quality and distinction. A curator is also critically and imaginatively involved in putting together objects in ways that produce new relations between things – and new forms of knowledge. Humanities scholars and educators curate by being critical in this more capacious sense of the term. Contemporary work in the humanities is therefore curatorial in the best sense of the word. It both reorganizes old materials and gathers them together with new materials to create new perspectives on the past, the present, and the future. This means critique – by which

Delbanco clearly means theory – is not a threat to the curatorial enterprise, but rather, is central to its intellectual and pedagogical vitality. Curation and critique are interdependent. When we articulate the value of the humanities we need to emphasize not only the body of knowledge they preserve, but also the value of the forms of critique they teach, and to underscore not only that critique is a skill integral to both scholarly work and critical citizenship, but also that it's central to the history of humanism itself. The problem with overemphasizing the curatorial model is that it perpetuates a largely static version of the humanities as a kind of caretaker enterprise. But the temporality of the humanities is fluid and reciprocal because we simultaneously engage the past, the present, and the future. Curating the past alters the past and appropriates it for thinking about contemporary problems, and the attempt to solve contemporary problems always pushes into the future.

Because I believe that the humanities have evolved in innovative and exciting ways in the last few decades, I argue in my book that we need to develop a clear, effective public description of the humanities that does justice to this innovation. I believe this alternative description not only needs to counter the argument that new, critical theories of the human and the texts and cultural forms they study have somehow ruined the humanities. It ought to mount an aggressive defense of the *positive role* that theory, a focus on social and political agency, and an expanded repertoire of methodologies and subject areas have played in the contemporary humanities, emphasizing how they expand traditional work in the humanities by extending its scope in new ways. I also believe that it's in our interest to link this stress on the value of disciplinary and interdisciplinary theories and methodologies to the more general argument I made earlier that we must underscore the transferable skills our students learn. Many of those skills are related to the forms of critical thinking students learn in courses with a strong theoretical and methodological component.

I make this argument partly because critical thinking has always been central to humanism, and because I see the stress on theory in the contemporary humanities as an extension of that emphasis. From this point of view it's wrong for critics to complain that theory has ruined the humanities. In fact, theory, in the form of critique, has been central to humanism over the course of its whole history, so it makes little sense to see critique as a departure from that tradition. I think it's in our interests, rhetorically and pragmatically, to draw a clear link between humanism's roots in critique and the role of critical theory in the humanities. Gerald Graff made this argument persuasively in the late 80s near the end of his *Professing Literature: An Institutional History*, when he insisted that with its “inquiry into assumptions, premises, and legitimating principles and concepts” (252) literary and critical theory had much in common with the abstract, speculative, and theoretical thinking of humanist philosophy and political and social theory. In my book I define “critique” as “the practice of systematically analyzing and interrogating the constitution of conceptual categories and the sources of their authority.” Critique is innovative in the best sense of the word. It involves exploring the historical and conceptual “development of norms that regulate our personal, social, and political lives together.” It also, of course, explores “the historical constitution of the 'we' these norms are supposed to protect.” For Judith Butler, writing about Foucault's approach to critique, it is about “bringing into relief the very framework of evaluation itself.” It's a mistake not to recognize that humanism in the 18th and 19th centuries evaluated the very frameworks of evaluation that had historically been used to think about things like art, truth, being, identity, rights, liberty, and power, and that therefore it makes sense to think of our own contemporary evaluation of these frameworks as *extending* that tradition. Because this ideal of critique has been central to the history of the humanities we ought to emphasize the role it plays in the contemporary humanities as well.

Of course we need to recognize that this view of the contemporary humanities, one that sees its deep

interest in critical theory, and its engagement with social justice issues as an *extension of* traditional humanism, is disputed by many posthumanist critics. While some of them want to acknowledge a continuity between humanism, posthumanism, and a contemporary humanities practice, many others insist that contemporary theory represents a thoroughgoing critique – and even rejection of – humanism. We don't have time tonight to explore the intricacies of this debate, but I think we have to acknowledge its importance. Why? Because the theory and practice of posthumanism is exerting a pressure on the margins of the humanities that is beginning to significantly effect how we conceive the constellation of its disciplines and practices. The scope of subjects and the range of methodologies we are defending when we defend the humanities are significantly changing. Much posthumanist critical theory positions itself as antagonistic to what it takes to be the conceptual inadequacies and political limitations of humanism. Because the humanities have traditionally been deeply connected to humanism and to perpetuating its ideals, the posthumanist critique of humanism challenges some of the foundational thinking we in the humanities take for granted. For example, the study of what we have always called “human nature” in the humanities, while it has traditionally taken place in the context of an engagement with philosophy, religion, history, and the expressive arts, is increasingly spilling over into fields associated with the STEM disciplines – technology, biology, animal studies, and neuroscience, to name some of the more prominent ones. It seems to me the posthumanist interest in the intersection of the human, the technological, the animal, and the ecologies in which they all interact represents an exciting, innovative, and promising expansion of the scope of the humanities. If that's the case, we need to find a way to incorporate this new and expanded study of the human into a public explanation of the value of the humanities aimed at an audience that might find it unfamiliar and even alienating. If we're going to build an accurate and inclusive contemporary description of the humanities it ought to emphasize both the teaching of traditional subjects and new ways we've developed for studying humanity not only in the past, but in the present, and with an eye toward the future.

I've been stressing the diversity of subjects and intellectual approaches that characterize the contemporary humanities, arguing that we need not be defensive both about the status and importance of the humanities, or about the theories and methodologies we use in our work as scholars and in the classroom. How can we emphasize the productive diversity of this work? One way to do so might be to articulate what I like to call a *network model* of the humanities, one that stresses the intersecting lines of the subjects and literacies we teach. Some argue the humanities have lost their center, but I believe the humanities have not *become* but have always *been* decentered. It's for this reason that a network model might make sense. Such a model would stress how knowledge in the humanities is produced not in separate, centered spheres but at points where lines of thinking, inquiry, theoretical work, and the pursuit of both traditional and newly conceived subject areas cross over and intersect each other in an attempt to solve shared problems. A networked model of the humanities wouldn't be hierarchical. It would be horizontal and balanced. From this point of view the teaching of literacies wouldn't simply be as important as the teaching of subject matter, and the teaching of skills wouldn't be more important than the teaching of traditions. Learning in each sphere would be seen as taking place in its intersection with the others. In a networked model of the humanities, all of the intersecting lines would represent literacies, both cultural and critical literacies. Cultural literacy, of course, has to do with the value of the historical, philosophical, literary, and artistic knowledge we teach, whereas critical literacy helps students to sharpen the range of communication and critical skills I referred to earlier. But cultural and critical literacy don't represent separate spheres of learning. They work in tandem, feeding off of one another.

To use my own field as an example, there's clearly a key link between the teaching of literature, the literary, and literacies. "Literature" refers to an object of knowledge and a collection of valuable texts, but the word "literary," while it means "of or pertaining to literature," is also a mode of being, or a

style, rather than simply a thing. Not to put too fine a phenomenological turn on it, but “literary” is in a way both a mode of being and a way of looking at things, a developed kind of sensibility that can inform the way we engage with a whole range of things that are not strictly speaking “literary.” “Literary” isn't a fixed, pre-existing thing, but a fluid category. But of course “literary” is also a kind of *competency*, a way of focusing our approach to phenomena of all kinds, a disposition that shapes the way we read and analyze and communicate to one another about everything.

The kind of network model for the humanities I've been sketching out would have the virtue of being innovative and forward looking while embodying tradition. It seems to me that any successful and productive defense of the humanities will need buy-in from a broad constituency, and that the best way to insure such buy-in is to strive for balance and inclusion. Those who are committed to a traditional conception of the humanities and who see their value as largely intangible, rooted in the kind of intellectual and inner growth that comes from exposure to historically significant works in philosophy, literature, religion, and the arts, ought to continue to stake their claim for the value of a humanities education in this conception of their value. But the hostility toward innovation that sometimes takes over such defenses ought to stop because it runs counter both to the traditions of innovation and the constructive conflict of ideas that have also characterized what's best about the humanities. Divided, we lose. But this also means those who are committed to the humanities as a space for thinking critically about the limits of humanism, who are committed to theoretical and methodological innovation that teaches students to think critically about tradition, and who want to foreground the transferable skills and competencies central to the courses they teach, need to make room for traditional ways to value the humanities. We need to make a comprehensive defense of the humanities that stresses *both* of these visions and that resists the idea that they are incompatible. Indeed, to the extent there is a tension between these two ways of valuing the humanities, that only underscores how our

disciplines are sites for robust debate, thus underscoring what's particularly valuable about a humanities education in the first place – the productive conflict in points of view and values they help to facilitate. What's great about the humanities is the way in which they preserve and value the past, but in a context in which that past is subject to reflective and constructive critique, so that the way in which we think about what constitutes the human keeps changing, and the collection of texts we teach that document the human keeps expanding as well. I don't believe it does anyone any good when those who think of themselves as defending a traditional conception of the humanities treat that conception as sacrosanct, and publicly lament its ruin by the forces of theory and political correctness, *or* by those interested in stressing the utilitarian value of a humanities education. But it also doesn't do anyone much good either when those who are committed to a posthumanist humanities engaged in a spirited critique of humanism, or who want to stress the communicative, critical, and technological skills the humanities teach, simply dismiss traditionalist as naive sentimentalists.

I envision the humanities as a constellation of disciplines that help students develop knowledge in both traditional and non-traditional subject areas, and to explore the history of how humanism has shaped our ideas about human nature, individual agency, and social justice within a diverse cultural, national, and transnational framework. Because new theories and methodologies in the humanities always challenge and expand those ideas, I believe we ought to pay close attention, along with our students, to the social and historical construction of the ideas they encounter and the claims they find the writers and artists they study making. For it is by focusing on the perpetual and productive conflict between tradition and innovation that a humanities education fosters both cultural and critical literacy, knowledge in the traditional subject areas of the humanities, and a range of skills -- reading, analytical, interpretive, writing, and critical thinking -- used not only in the humanities classroom but also in the world outside of the classroom.

I think we owe it to our students to come together around such an ideal – and I think those of us who are educators owe it to ourselves as well, since doing so will help us move beyond the rhetoric of crisis. It's time to turn the page on that shopworn story.